Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

Alabama Idlers Get Orders To Work Or Fight

MAR 5 - 1942

Dixon Invokes Vagrancy Statute; Petree Warns Unwilling Farm Labor

Declaring there was a shortage of labor on the farms as well as in the factories of Alabama, Gov. Dixon yesterday launched a "Work or Fight" ultimatum aimed at "the idler and loafer" and called on all peace officers to intensify their efforts in enforcement of the State's vagrancy laws.

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Simultaneously, Judge John D. Petree, director of the Department of Industrial Relations, took action to deny unemployment compensation benefits to farm workers who engage in other work long enough to qualify for unemployment benefits, and then refuse farm jobs when offered.

Judge Petree said that instances had been reported where men who had hitherto worked on the farm had gotten temporary jobs on defense projects, worked long enough to qualify for unemployment compensation and then when their defense work ran out, refused farm employment while at the same time applying for unemployment compensation. "If such persons can be referred to suitable farm work but fails to apply or accept such work, the Unemployment Compensation Agency should be notified immediately, so that consideration can be given to the application of the disqualification provision of the law," Judge Petree directed, in a general letter to State directors, field supervisors and local office managers of the U. S. Employment Service.

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Vagrancy Law Has Teeth

Gov. Dixon's statement, which was issued after receipt of numerous letters from farmers in recent months lamenting the shortage of farm labor, cited sections of the 1940 Code providing penalties against vagrants, vagabonds and tramps. Among those classed as vagrants in the Code are: "Any person who wanders or strolls about in idleness, who is able to work, and has no property sufficient for his support": also "Any person leading an idle immoral or profligate life, who has no property sufficient for his support and who is able to work and does not work." Conviction for vagrancy carries a maximum penalty of $500 fine and 12 months hard labor. The Code expressly provides that in a prosecution for vagrancy the burden of proof shall not rest on the State to show that the accused has no legitimate means of support.

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Gov. Dixon's statement, addressed "To All Peace Officers of the State" follows:

"We are at war. Those who are needed to fight are being called into service, but the success of the fighter depends upon the worker who must produce the tools of war. There is a shortage of labor today not only in the factories, but on the farms of Alabama.

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"There is no room for the idler or loafer. There is a place and need for every able bodied citizen to work or fight.

"I am informed that there are still idlers and vagrants among us. Our State has a comprehensive law relating to vagrants, vagabonds and tramps (Sections 437 to 444, Title 14, Code of Alabama 1940), the rigid enforcement of which will aid in the apprehension of various criminals and will force the vagrants to work or go to jail.

"I urge upon all the peace officers of the State that they intensify their activities against vagrants and idlers thereby greatly assisting in the preparation for and prosecution of the war.

Petree Sends Out Orders

Director Petree's letter to field supervisors and others of the employment service cited the need for increased production in agriculture as well as industry, and pointed out that the drain of men into the Army and industrial employment is leaving the nation "extremely short" of farm workers. He said that many individuals "who have always been farmers, sharecroppers, or farm laborers," are filing claims for unemployment benefits based on recent employment mainly on defense projects.

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"Here in the central office we believe that such workers should be encouraged or even directed to return to their farming activities, thereby contributing much to meet the national need for increased production of farm products," the letter stated.

Claims takers were directed to notify the unemployment compensation agency of any refusal of such applicants to return to farm employment, with a view to disqualifying them for unemployment benefits.

"An individual whose normal and usual occupation has been farming and who has been regularly engaged in farming should have his 'customary employment' considered to be that of farming," the letter said.

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An incentive to such applicants to return to farm work was seen in the following paragraph from Judge Petree's letter:

"If the unemployed individual accepts employment on a farm and continues in such employment until the work season is over, then he may become eligible for benefits if other suitable work is not available."

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

ALABAMA ROUNDS UP IDLE LABOR

'Work-Or-Fight' Order Is Issued By Governor In War Crisis

MAR 5 - 1942

SHORTAGE OF FARM WORKERS IS CITED

Peace Officers Told To Enforce State Laws Against Vagrants

MAR 5 - 1942

MONTGOMERY, Ala., March 4—(AP)—Alabama enunciated a "work-or-fight" policy Wednesday, Gov. Dixon asserting in a statement "to all peace officers" that "there is no room for the idler or loafer."

This was followed promptly by an order from John D. Petree, director of industrial relations, that field supervisors report immediately any persons with farm backgrounds now drawing unemployment compensation and refusing to accept agricultural jobs.

"There is a shortage of labor today not only in the factories, but on the farms of Alabama," Dixon said, adding that "our state has a comprehensive law relating to vagrants, vagabonds and tramps" and recommending they either go to work or jail.

Farm Jobs Refused

Petree said "many" who had worked on defense projects sufficiently long to qualify for unemployment compensation when their jobs played out now refused to go back to farming.

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If they earned as much as $450 in a quarter they can draw the maximum of $15 weekly in unemployment compensation until a "suitable" job is found for them or they exhaust benefit credits.

In his letter, the chief of industrial relations told subordinates:

"When any person who, until recently, has been employed on some defense project comes to one of the employment offices to register for work and to file a claim for benefits, his work history should be studied closely, and if he has a background of work experience which clearly indicates that he has worked largely on a farm, the claim taker should consider him in one of the following categories and direct him accordingly:

"1. If he is a person who owns, leases, or rents land, he should be directed to 'return to his customary self-employment' which would be his farm. Upon his failure to do so, the unemployment compensation agency should be notified so that the proper consideration may be given to invoking the disqualification provisions of the law.

"2. If he was formerly a sharecropper or farm laborer, he should be referred to employment as such. If such person can be referred to suitable farm work but fails to apply or accept such work, the unemployment compensation agency should be notified immediately, so that consideration can be given to the application of the disqualification provisions of the law."

Able-Bodied Needed

The governor asserted that "there is a place and need for every able-bodied citizen to work or fight" in his statement, which follows:

"We are at war. Those who are needed to fight are being called into service, but the success of the fighter depends upon the worker who must produce the tools of war. There is a shortage of labor today not only in the factories, but on the farms of Alabama.

"There is no room for the idler or loafer. There is a place and need for every able-bodied citizen to work or fight.

"I am informed that there are still idlers and vagrants among us. Our state has a comprehensive law relating to vagrants, vagabonds and tramps (Sections 437 to 444, Title 14, Code of Alabama 1940), the rigid enforcement of which will aid in the apprehension of various criminals and will force the vagrants to work or go to jail.

"I urge upon all the peace officers of the state that they intensify their activities against vagrants and idlers thereby greatly assisting in the preparation for any prosecution of the war."

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

Negro Thought Joining Union Was A Crime

MAR 13 1942

An illiterate negro farm hand's apparent notion that trying to join a "union" is a crime, or at least highly reprehensible conduct, was brought out Thursday, in an echo of Tallapoosa County's alleged "communist riot" of March, 1933. The State Board of Pardons and Paroles granted parole to Jug Moss, negro who was convicted of participating in the outbreak and given 10 to 15 years for assault with intent to murder. Moss, who could not write his name, in a plea to the board made his mark beside a statement asserting: "'I was charged with attempt to murder, but I have not tried to hurt anyone nor have I tried to join any union as the people say I was."

Statement in a file from a board investigator described the incident as a "communist riot" in which 28 negroes participated, of whom four were killed, 21 given sentences of 10 years or more, Moss being among them; and only three escaped. Three Tallapoosa deputies were wounded, it was stated.

MAR 13 1942

Pleas presented to the pardon board are often wildly conflicting, though probably never more so than in the case of O. C. Grimes, Pike County negro paroled Thursday. Grimes was convicted of throwing acid on another of his race, and given four to five years, Jan. 28, 1939. In his plea to the board he described himself as victim of an attack; he resisted with the first thing that came to hand, and being in the yard near the "wash place" got his hand on a box of potash and hurled it at his assailant, hitting him in the mouth. Statement from a board investigator said that Grimes went to the house of his victim and poured potash and water in his mouth as he slept, inflicting serious but not fatal injuries.

A total of 11 paroles were granted Thursday, and 38 applications denied.

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

Farm Labor Troubles Butler

MAR 18 1942

MAR 18 1942

Meetings Held To Solve Problem

CHAPMAN, Ala., March 17.—In an effort to solve the farm labor problem in Butler County, the first of a series of meetings was held in Chapman on Friday night under the direction of the USDA War Board of Butler County. A representative group of colored people of Chapman were in attendance, and discussed with the board means and methods of supplying the necessary labor to harvest some 20,000 acres to be planted to peanuts for oil this spring. F. O. Roland, chairman of the labor problem committee, led the discussion together with brief talks by the following board members and business men: Floyd McGowin, president of W. T. Smith Lumber Co.; Robert A. Beeland, president, First National Bank of Greenville; Rowe Johnson, instructor, vocational agriculture of Georgiana High School, and Morgan Thomas, instructor, vocational agriculture of Butler County High School of Greenville. At the request of the board, Elliot Robbins, colored farm agent, and Prof. A. B. Carter, principal of the Chapman Colored School, planned the meeting. The farm agent also served as master of ceremonies and others participating on the program were: H. Z. Franklin, colored home demonstration agent; James Herbert and Prof. W. C. Paton, of Greenville, and Rev. E. M. Graham, of Chapman.

Following an appeal by the farm agent at the Colored Teachers Institute held also on Friday, 51 colored principals are at present making a census of available labor among the colored people throughout the county. Through the courtesy of Mr. McGowin, all Negro employes of the W. T. Smith Lumber Co. have been called upon to help supplement the labor shortage, and in turn help "Win the War." According to Mr. Roland, transitory or stationary camps are to be set up in areas where the labor is most needed. All school principals have been given forms which call for names and addresses of volunteers, who will be given a fair wage for harvesting such crops as peanuts, cotton and corn together with other farm crops essential to our present war effort. Children from 12 years and above and women and all the man power available are expected to register with the school principal nearest to them within the next 30 days.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

NEGROES SLATE DEFENSE RALLY

Dean William Pickens To Lead Activities During Big Celebration

APR 18 1942

Negro organizations throughout the city are sponsoring a mammoth patriotic rally to be held Monday when Dean William Pickens, nationally known Negro leader, will lead activities.

Pickens, loaned to the U. S. Treasury Department by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, will give Negro residents an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism by the purchase of war stamps and bonds.

A parade, a bond sale of $50,000 and a series of entertainments are on the program which is to begin at 7:30 p.m. Dr. E. W. Taggart is directing the parade plans.

Pickens is making a nationwide tour for the Treasury Department to promote sale of bonds.

Sponsoring organizations are:

Jefferson County Negro Democratic Council, Bessemer Branch, N. A. A. C. P.; Bessemer Civic League, Jefferson County Dental Study Club, Birmingham Branch, N. A. C. P.; Slossfield Civic Association, the Minnie E. Chambliss Branch of the Music Study Club, City Federation of Women's Clubs, Rosedale Civic League, Fairfield Civic League, Council of Clubs, American Legion, Britton McKenzie Post, Baptist Ministerial Alliance, Interdenominaitonal Ministerial Alliance, Fellowship Council Ministerial Alliance, Mineral District Medical Society, Birmingham Teachers Association, Jefferson County Teachers Association, Jefferson County Nurses Association, CIO and AFL, United Mine Workers of America, Birmingham Negro Business League, Birmingham Negro Insurance Association, Elks Lodge and Pan-Hellenic Council.

APR 18 1942

School Boys Get Call To Duty On Alabama Farms

Birmingham, Ala. News

APR 18 1942

MONTGOMERY, April 24.—(Special)—Alabama high school boys received their first call into war service today. Birmingham 2057

C. F. Anderson, director for Alabama of the United States Employment Service, sent an appeal to the principals of all high schools—white and colored—to organize high school boys into groups of the Youths' Farm Army in order that they may be available for farm work this Summer and Fall.

High school boys who want to serve their country in the "Food for Victory" Campaign will be registered on a special form by group leaders who will in turn send the cards to area offices of the United States Employment Service. They will be organized under a leader who will be designated by the high school principal. Each boy will sign his own registration card and will show when he will be available for farm work and what kind of farm work he is trained to do or is willing to learn.

Mr. Anderson pointed out the great need for farm workers in Alabama. He told the high school principals that the United States Employment Service, in co-operation with other agencies, is planning to transport the boys to the fields where and when needed.

Birmingham, Ala. News
May 8, 1942

Labor Taking Defense Jobs Adds To Farmers' Problems

FSA Regional Head Offers Seven-Point Program To Improve Lot Of Agriculturist

HUNTSVILLE, Ala.—Several factors enter into farm displacement in Alabama, not the least of which is the fact that farmers can make a great deal more money working in defense industries, it was brought out here before the House committee investigating the problem here Friday.

At the same time, the committee was given a program for stabilizing labor on farms in the Southeast when E. S. Morgan, regional director of the Farm Security Administration, outlined a seven-point plan designed to improve vastly the lot of the farmer by offering certain economic and social advantages not generally applicable now.

"Improvement of conditions of work and living," said Mr. Morgan, "are needed, not only to avert a farm labor shortage during the emergency, but as a long-range correction of historic conditions in this region.

There will never be a solution to the farm labor problem, he said, until the rural wage worker is:

1. Invested with a status, respectable and responsible.
2. Given a security for 12 months' living, whether a wage hand or a land owner.
3. Assured of occupation, whether upon a plot for his own subsistence or on "public works" (housing construction, a reclamation program, rural industry, projects allied with forest and utilization of forest products, etc.)
4. Included in a social welfare program.
5. Embraced in a broader and more definite employment service.
6. Given a place to live and conditions under which living is tolerable.
7. In case of the migratory worker, given safe and adequate means of shelter, transportation, freedom from physical and moral contaminations."

* * *

MR. MORGAN also pointed out that one-crop cotton and the consequent under-employment of farm labor under the historic system of farming in this region is responsible for many evils of the labor problem.

A survey recently conducted by the FSA shows the comparative utilization of labor under three systems: the historic system, which utilizes only 198 man-days of labor out of 565.3 available in the average small-farm family; a modified system with cotton slightly reduced, and a partial subsistence program added, which utilizes 276 man-days of the 565.3, and a well-developed system of complete subsistence combined with cash crops, which makes possible utilization of 435 man-days.

In a prepared statement filed with the committee, John L. Liles, Jr., extension economist of Auburn, said it is not possible with present prices of agricultural products to earn an income from farms comparable to that which can be gained in industrial employment. This migration from farms to cities, he said, represents a considerable flow of labor, and one which is gaining in volume.

The movement was described as greater in the vicinity of such defense centers as Birmingham, Childersburg, the Tri-Cities and Mobile with a general exodus of labor from the Black Belt, largely on the part of Negro workers.

* * *

CALLING ATTENTION to the objective for agriculture in Alabama this year when increased production ranging from 7 to 150 per cent is the goal, Mr. Liles declared that, if the goals are reached — while predicting they will be — a great deal more labor than has been required in recent years will be necessary because the crops and livestock for which increases have been asked are higher in labor requirements than those formerly grown.

Activities related to the war effort, according to Mr. Morgan, are pulling off the farm proportionately larger numbers of non-FSA participants than those under the supervision and guidance of this agency.

"In other words, there is a direct relationship between stability and programs of rehabilitation which include efforts to improve tenure, living standards, facilities for production and marketing and community existence," he said.

4-1942

Dothan, Ala. Eagle
August 27, 1942

250 Negroes Listed In Drive To Provide Houston Farm Help

A campaign sponsored by a group of Negro leaders among Negroes of Dothan and Houston County, to mobilize labor for the cotton and peanut harvests, already has resulted in listing of more than 250 workers, it was announced today.

These 250 workers were obtained, committee spokesmen said, in the first day of canvass of Negro sections in Dothan. A good many more field workers are expected to be obtained, it was said.

These first workers signed will go to work in the fields tomorrow, it was stated. Labor stations have been set up in various sections of the city and at them farmers needing labor may contact laborers. These stations are located at the following points:

East Side, Tom King's place; North Highland, corner of Montana and Houston streets; Baptist Bottom, Levite building; South Side, Davis store, corner South Alice and South streets, and Cherry street, George Shadgett's store, corner of Newton and Cherry streets.

The campaign was undertaken by the Negro group in cooperation with the Dothan Chamber of Commerce. Plans for drive and the heavy need for labor during harvest time this year were outlined at a mass meeting of Negroes Sunday in the Negro Baptist church. At that time, the campaign group was organized under as the Victory Farm Workers Organization of Houston County.

Heading the group as chairman is the Rev. C. T. Hayes pastor of the Negro Baptist church, and other members includes these co-chairmen: Rev. Hall, E. Price, E. [illegible]wn, Marion Hawk and Rev. I. [illegible] Alford, and Rosa Lee Brown, [illegible]etary.

Birmingham Post
Birmingham, Alabama

TOWN'S NEGROES HARVEST CROPS NEEDED IN WAR

SEP 14 1942

Race Leaders Co-operate In Dothan Chamber's Plan To Get Out Idle Labor

SEP 14 1942

By United Press

MONTGOMERY, Sept. 14.—The "Dothan plan" for harvesting cotton and peanuts was commended to the rest of the state today by C. F. Anderson, director for Alabama of the U. S. Employment Service.

SEP 14 1942

The program, which Mr. Anderson described as "most effective," was developed with the co-operation of the Dothan Chamber of Commerce, a committee of leading Negroes and the Dothan office of the employment service.

"War construction has taken thousands of farm workers from the fields of the wiregrass," he said. "It was feared that sufficient farm labor could not be recruited to pick the cotton and harvest the peanuts.

Negro Leaders Called Upon

"Leading Negroes of Dothan were called in by the Chamber of Commerce. They agreed that the 'food for victory' program would benefit all classes and that all classes should lend their aid. A mass meeting of Negroes was called in Dothan.

SEP 14 1942

"As a result, a house-to-house canvass of Negro homes was made by a committee of Negroes. More than 600 Negroes—men, women and children—volunteered for farm work and agreed to remain in the fields as long as needed.

Supervisor Is Chosen

"The committee selected a supervisor for Negro crews. Space was provided by the Dothan office of the employment service and the Negro supervisor, under the direction of V. W. Wilson, farm placement officer of the Dothan employment office, organized the 600 Negroes into crews, which are transported each day to and from the peanut and cotton fields. The salary of the Negro supervisor is paid by the Dothan Chamber of Commerce.

"Our reports indicate that the Dothan plan has resulted in the gathering of many acres of cotton and will result in harvesting peanuts which otherwise would have remained in the fields. It shows what can be accomplished by organization, with the burden shared by all classes.

All Concerned Benefitted

"Under the Dothan plan, the crops are being harvested and hundreds of Negroes are being paid a fair wage for their services. Therefore, the farmers, the Negro population of Dothan, and our entire nation, which needs the crops, are being benefitted.

SEP 14 1942

"I hope the Dothan plan will be extended to other sections of the state. I know it has already spread beyond Houston County. Reports from local offices show that it or an adaption of the plan is to be used in Pike, Coffee and other counties."

ALABAMA

Talladega, Ala., Daily Home
September 11, 1942

Dothan Harvesting Plan Is Given Nod

MONTGOMERY, Sept. 11. —(UP)—The "Dothan plan" for harvesting cotton and peanuts was commended to the rest of the state today by C. F. Anderson, director for Alabama of the U. S. Employment Service.

The program, which Anderson described as "most effective," was developed with the cooperation of the Dothan Chamber of Commerce, a committee of leading Negroes and the Dothan office of the employment service.

"War construction has taken thousands of farm workers from the fields of the wiregrass," Anderson said. "It was feared that sufficient farm labor could not be recruited to pick the cotton and harvest the peanuts.

"Leading Negroes of Dothan were called in by the Chamber of Commerce. They agreed that the 'food for victory' program would benefit all classes and that all classes should lend their aid. A mass meeting of Negroes was called in Dothan.

"As a result, a house to house canvass of Negro homes was made by a committee of Negroes. More than 600 Negroes—men, women and children—volunteered for warm work and agreed to remain in the fields as long as needed.

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"Under the Dothan plan, the crops are being harvested and hundreds of Negroes are being paid a fair wage for their services. Therefore, the farmers, the Negro population of Dothan, and our entire nation, which needs the crops, are being benefitted.

"I hope the Dothan plan will be extended to other sections of the state. I know it has already spread beyond Houston County. Reparts from local offices show that it or an adoption of the plan is to be used in Pike, Coffee and other counties."

Anniston, Ala. Star
September 15, 1942

The Dothan Plan

With farmers all over the state of Alabama, and elsewhere in the South and the nation faced with a farm labor shortage, the plan evolved through the combined efforts of the Dothan (Ala.) Chamber of Commerce, a committee of leading Negroes and the Dothan office of the U. S. Employment Service has received many favorable comments and could well be tried by every section of the South.

War construction has taken thousands of farm workers from the fields of the wiregrass section, as it has everywhere else in the state, and it was feared that sufficient farm labor could not be recruited to pick the cotton and harvest the peanuts.

Leading Negroes of Dothan were called in by the Chamber of Commerce. They agreed that the "food for victory" program would benefit all classes, and that all classes should lend their aid. A mass meeting of Negroes was then called.

As a result, a house-to-house canvass of Negro homes was made by a committee of Negroes. More than 600 colored persons—men, women and children—volunteered for farm work and agreed to remain in the fields as long as needed. There was no compulsion, and a fair wage was agreed upon.

A supervisor was selected for the Negro crews, and this Negro supervisor organized the 600 Negroes into crews, which were transported each day to and from the peanut and cotton fields. The salary of the supervisor is paid by the Dothan Chamber of Commerce.

Reports indicate that the Dothan plan has resulted in the gathering of many acres of cotton, and will result in the harvesting of peanuts which otherwise would have remained in the fields. The success of the plan shows what can be accomplished by organization, with the burden shared by all classes.

Under the plan, the crops are being harvested and hundreds of Negroes are being paid a fair wage for their services. Therefore, the farmers, the Negro population of Dothan, and our entire nation, which needs those crops, are being benefited.

The adoption of this plan in Calhoun County might not be a bad idea at all, for we feel sure that it would meet with success here as it did in the Dothan area. It is certain that something must be done to alleviate the farm labor shortage if our farmers are to harvest their cotton and peanuts in their contribution to the "food-for-victory" program.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

Growers In South Say Draft All Eligible Men, Assign Some To Fields

These Would Be Taken From Those Less Psysically Able To Do Military Duty

OCT 18 1942

BY L. O. BRACKEEN

AUBURN, Ala.—Farmers throughout the South are beginning to believe that the best way to solve present farm labor shortages is to draft all able bodied men of eligible age into the army and organize an agricultural corps to do farm work.

These opinions were freely expressed in interviews with agricultural leaders and farmers of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. They think that, after taking basic training, those men best suited would be assigned to farm work just as they are at present assigned to other corps of the army.

All those interviewed expressed belief that America's war problem No. 1 in 1943 will be food and that the old people and children being left on farms will be unable to produce enough food for the Allied Nations unless more labor is made available on farms. They pointed out that in recent years each American farmer has been able to produce enough food for himself and three other people but that next year this must be stepped up to where he will feed himself and six or seven other people. They stated that this must be done with less labor, machinery, fertilizer and insecticides.

OCT 18 1942

Most of the farmers stated it will be necessary to continue drafting farm boys or else they will enlist. They do not want to be listed as unpatriotic therefore, they are enlisting, even though their services are needed for farm work, rather than to be referred to as slackers. This was the principal reason assigned as to why it will be necessary to draft them into the army and assign them to the farm rather than freezing them on the farm.

They have read and heard a great deal about the suggestion that a Women's Land Army be organized for doing farm work. Generally they believe it worth a trial. They point out that women working in fields is nothing new in the South and that in England the need for farm labor has been partly met by the use of the Women's Land Army, which consists of girls who have enlisted for the duration, to serve as "hired men," just as other English women have enlisted in the various armed services. In many cases women, chiefly from the cities, do all the work on large dairy farms. At present there are over 50,000 of these regularly enlisted Land Army Girls who work a minimum of 48 hours a week for small pay and under regular official discipline.

Many farmers have classified in their own minds America's fighting forces into three groups, two of which are to destroy life and property and the other to give life so that the enemies may be conquered. One group does the actual fighting, another makes planes, tanks and ammunition for fighting while the third produces food for feeding those in the other two groups. To their minds one group is just as essential in winning the war as the other.

OCT 18 1942

Farmers are in full agreement that it is most important for the Allied Nations to have the right thing in the right amount at the right place at the right time. They and their families are determined to do whatever is necessary to have plenty of food at the right place at the right time.

During 1943 farmers plan to produce war crops essential to winning the war. This means turning farm surplus crops to peanuts, soybeans, flax and food crops, working long hours and making use of farm machinery and horses and mules.

Brundidge Ala. Sentinel
September 3, 1942

Peanut Harvest

In response to a request by the government this year, farmers of Pike County patriotically planted many acres of peanuts. These peanuts will be mainly used to replace the oil heretofore imported from other countries.

Due to the shortage of labor, many farmers are up against a problem that may easily be solved. There is only one way to get the job done—that is by work! Every man, woman and child who does not have a full-time job can do his or her part by going out and working during every spare hour they can find.

In Houston County, the Chamber of Commerce of Dothan sponsored a "Victory Farm Workers Organization." A mass meeting was held in Dothan and a canvass of all Negro families was made, enrolling 502 Negroes. Signed pledges were made to the effect that the members would go to the fields and work until the peanuts were harvested.

The committee designated a supervisor of the volunteer crews and office space was provided by the Dothan office of the U. S. Employment Service. Transportation was arranged for the workers. When one field was finished, they were quickly transferred to another, thereby enabling them to work full time.

Here in Brundidge the livelihood of the town depends solely upon the success of farmers. Many of the local merchants are also farmers, therefore, we believe the people of Brundidge should do their part in seeing that peanuts are harvested.

Why can't we have a "Victory Farm Workers Organization?" We can and we will. Simply by the cooperation of all classes of our citizens.

We suggest that the local Rotary Club put it over.

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala

REALITIES ON ALABAMA FARMS

The bogey of scarcity is becoming a reality on Alabama farms. It is not yet a scarcity of output but of labor, of implements, of fertilizer, and of insecticides for operations in 1943.

OCT 29 1942

And all of these deficiencies forecast reduced output next year. P. O. Davis, director of the Extension Service of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute at Auburn is sanguine in the belief that much cropland in Alabama will be idle next year.

For the remainder of 1942 the outlook is not so gloomy. It appears that most current crops will be harvested without undue delay. Cotton picking is a job that can be done by women and children with the help of regular labor and a little from nearby towns.

OCT 29 1942

With peanut harvesting the situation is different. It is more of a man-labor job; and the supply of farm labor is becoming less and less with the turning of the wheels of the Selective Service system and the steady migration of farm labor to industrial plants engaged in war work. These pay wages far above what farmers can afford to pay.

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There is, for example, the story of Olin Riser, Talladega County farmer. His labor supply is down to one man who is not competent for war industry work. The two manage to milk and feed a small dairy herd which has been reduced. Other parts of this farm are idle except for grazing. Before war deleted his farm of labor Mr. Riser operated one of the more successful diversified farms in Alabama.

Unofficial estimate has it that a third or more of the cropland in the adjoining county of Shelby is idle this year and more of it will be idle next year. In Cleburne County three leading farmers reported recently that lack of labor caused 40 per cent of their land to produce nothing except weeds this year. They are more pessimistic about 1943.

Down near Mobile where shipbuilding plants are operating at full speed farmers who found work in them after making crops now find that if they take time off from war plants to pick their cotton they lose money. The value of the cotton they pick each day is less than their daily war-plant wages. Obviously, these farmers don't believe that farmers are causing inflation.

This feeling is shared by farmers throughout Alabama. Instances of labor shortages named above are examples with counterparts throughout the State. Farmers are not kidding themselves about labor. They know that they can't compete with industry in the employment of labor. They will do their best with what they have, not depending upon hired labor and tenants except those who are not qualified for industrial work.

OCT 29 1942

To date no intentions to sell Alabama farms are reported—as is being done in Midwest States—but land that can't be cropped or cultivated with available labor will rest or mark time until better days for operating farms. Some farmers will plant permanent crops; others will let part of their land rest; some all.

They are faced with ability to buy only a fourth as many new implements as they had in 1940; and two-thirds to three-fourths as much fertilizer. And fertilizer is a major factor in the production of crops in Alabama. The same is true of all States of the Southeast, and increasingly true in other States.

OCT 29 1942

Farmers of Alabama are not satisfied with national price and wage legislation and administration. They know that agriculture is an essential business in both war and peace. Hence, they believe that prices they receive for their products at the market should be high enough for them to employ labor in competition with war industries. Stated differently, they believe that the farmer who makes milk to keep soldiers alive should be on the same level in prices and guarantees as the factory that makes powder to kill the enemy.

Notwithstanding the handicaps under which they are operating farmers will make as much food and fiber as they can next year . . . and until victory is won. History reveals that farmers have always been patriotic; and they are more so now because of past achievements and the fact that more is involved in this than any previous war.

Birmingham Post
Birmingham, Alabama

ANTI-POLL TAX BILL ENDORSED

NOV 10 1942

Alabama Farmers' Union Also Seeks To Widen Its Organization

NOV 10 1942

A resolution endorsing the anti-poll tax bill, another calling for adjustment of peanut prices, a third asking for a solution of the farm labor shortage by Government subsidy, and plans for enlarging the Alabama Farmers' Union to a Southeastern States organization featured two-day sessions of the Farmers' Union here.

The meetings were held at the Bricklayers' Hall, 725 25th-st, n, and speakers included representatives from the United Steel Workers of America and the International Union, of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers of America.

Alabama's senators were asked to support the anti-poll tax measure and a resolution from Center Hill local union, in Chilton County, on peanut prices was concurred in. The convention asked the adjustment of prices so that farmers who planted peanuts for the Government for oil making might receive a price comparable to the price paid those who planted for the markets. They felt that a reported price of $83 a ton for oil peanuts and $141 for market peanuts was unfair.

NOV 10 1942

The delegates voted to allow the National Farmers' Union to use their charter as the base for a Southeastern Farmers' Union which would include Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida.

The Farm Security Administration was endorsed.

Officers were elected as follows: Gerald Harris, Birmingham, president, unopposed; Franklin Patterson Jr., Chilton County, vice president; O. H. Mastin, Birmingham, secretary-treasurer, and board members: Dewey Oates and B. L. Cobb, of Chilton County; G. H Campbell, of Etowah County; J. B Morton, of Blount County, and J G. Stewart, of Walker County.

Japs May Be Used As Farm Laborers

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP)—Proposals that several hundred Japanese farmers who are being interned at a point in the state of Arkansas may be used to help meet farm labor shortages was causing considerable speculation here. The Japanese are being moved at several points in the south, one quite large colony being established in this state.

On the coast Japanese truck gardners proved very efficient. They are said to have cultivated more than $42,000,000 worth of vegetables in that state last year. Neither American whites, Negroes or Chinese farmers were able to compete with the Japs who tended each head of lettuce as though it were a rosh bush of great value and who worked the entire family in the fields.

On the basis of the admittedly slow and inefficient farming indulged in throughout the south, those who are considering the matter wonder what may happen in Dixie if the Japs are really turned loose.

From Washington, Secretary of Agriculture Wickard is said to have admitted that proposals had been made but said that state government's attitude would be taken into consideration before any authorizations were given and that many other angles were necessary to consider.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

Forced at Gun's Point To Stay Married to Her 78-Year-Old Uncle

Jackson County Sheriff Refuses to Send Back Girl, 17, Who Has Found New Life Here After Escaping Farm

A 17-year-old girl who came to a new life in Kansas City to escape from drudgery and the unpleasantness of a so-called marriage to her 78-year-old uncle will not have to go back to an Arkansas tenant farm. The long arm of the law reached forth, but failed to grab its intended victim.

The story of 78-year-old Silas from Arkansas who had the nerve to come to Kansas City to charge that the girl had committed bigamy by marrying a man here, when he has another wife living in his own house, is unbelievable. Yet it did happen right here in Kansas City last Saturday.

The story is about a girl who never had a chance—until she met a fine young man from Kansas City—and she had the courage to take that chance. Her aged "husband", her relatives, the owner of the land on which she worked—all of them want to drag her back into the sordidness which she has left behind her.

The interest and wisdom of a local lawyer, and the sympathetic feelings of the county sheriff have given this young girl the assurance that she can turn her back on the past and think only of her new home, pretty clothes, and, above all, the husband she loves. In the space of three months, she has learned to write, and to use better language. She knows how to dress, which adds to her naturally pretty appearance She is learning to take part in activities she had never heard of before.

We will start at the beginning. Over 17 years ago, probably in November of 1924, a daughter was born to a woman who lived on a cotton plantation near Blytheville, Ark., We say "probably" because the heroine of our story doesn't know when her birthday really is. According to all she has been told, she will be 18 years old sometime in November. No one knows anything about her father. The mother died when she was two years old, and from that time on she live around, here and there, with various relatives.

Later her uncle and his wife took her in. (This uncle is the man who now claims to be her husband.) Under this farm system, which borders on peonage, an extra mouth to feed is no problem; for the extra hands and arms do much more work than the cost of food for the extra mouth. The more children, the more hands to do the work.

When she was 14 years old, it was discovered that this orphaned girl was pregnant. Presumably the one responsible for this condition was the uncle in whose home she lived. In the manner of one who would protect her and look after her, he told her he would marry her "for six months". They went to the courthouse where the uncle got "some kind of papers."

Never Saw a School

The girl had never seen a school, could not read or write, and knew only the simple rules of their farm life with all of its superstitions born of ignorance. To her mind, some sort of arrangement had been made that was a "six-months marriage" which could give protection to her child. The baby was born and lived for four months.

During the entire time the girl lived at the home of her uncle, his wife was in the same house. She lived in one part, and the girl in the other. This woman, nearer his own age, is believed to be about his third wife, for he tells about a first wife who died, another who died, and another from whom he was separated and divorced. He has three different sets of children, none of them old enough to be the parents of his young so-called wife, who fled to Kansas City. None of them are younger than 16 years of age, while his child-bride is now not quite 18.

Not understanding the ceremony which had been performed, the young girl did not believe she was really married. (She was far below the age of consent). Many times the old man forced her at point of gun to go to bed with him. This state of affairs existed until the early part of this year.

Marries Here

During the Christmas season, an intelligent, hard-working young man from Kansas City visited some of his friends in Arkansas. While there he met this girl, who was becoming more attractive as the years went by. He liked her, and evidently she liked him; for when she decided to say goodbye to the life she was being forced to live, she headed for Kansas City and looked up her new friend. He took her to the courthouse and they were married. This was in May.

Desiring to start anew, with no secrets from her husband, she told him the whole story. Together they sought the advice of a lawyer, W. Franklyn, Clark. He heard the story and couldn't believe his ears. From that point he became interested in the girl's plight.

Ever so often the girl would get a letter from the man from whom she had fled, begging her to come back. Sometimes the letter would be from the other relatives. She even got one from Silas's older wife, which said: "Come on back. I won't bother you. I'll let you and Silas alone."

Silas Seeks "Wife"

On Saturday, the under-sheriff of Jackson county, J. A. Purdome, had a visitor. It was Silas. In his hand he bore a letter from the sheriff and the prosecutor of his county. The letter, which was addressed to the sheriff, stated: "This man, Silas ———, one of my tenants, has a wife who ran away to Kansas City and married another man. Please help him find her and send her back" (The sheriff owns the cotton-plantation where Silas is a tenant).

The local sheriff's office had no information about the age of the wife, nor the kind of marriage. They thought they had a woman who should be arrested for bigamy. Deputies went to the girl's home to arrest her. When she told them she had a lawyer, they took her to Attorney Clark's office, and he accompanied them to the sheriff's office. There the amazing tale was unfolded.

The girl told the sheriff and deputies the whole story. A stenographer recorded the statement. As she related all the gruesome details, tears ran down her cheeks. She begged the sheriff to let her stay here. In despair, she cried out, "I'll go to jail, I'll go to the pen, I'll DIE, but I won't go back."

After hearing such a confession and seeing how she hated her former life, the sheriff and the lawyer asked the old man why he would insist on taking her back.

Standing up to all his height, and talking in an important sounding tone of voice, Silas announced, "My white folks told me to come up here and see these white folks and bring that girl back."

Stenographer Horrified

Hearing this, the white stenographer threw down her note pad, jumped to her feet, and exclaimed, "Mr. Clark, can't you put this man in jail? Surely there's a law to keep him from taking this poor girl away."

The girl's lawyer was so angered by the old man's attitude, that he announced that he would have him arrested and bring charges on his landowner before he would see the girl go to jail.

Clark sought to show the sheriff the kind of life Negroes are forced to live under such a system. "Have you ever been out of debt to your landowner?" he asked the old man.

His answer was yes. "I just been with him a year," he said.

Then Clark asked him if the present owner had paid up his debts at the farm he left, and the old man admitted that he had.

Clark summed the situation up in this way, "This man has never been out of debt in his life, and never will be. He does what the white man says. He had one wife, living, took advantage of this girl, and now tries to call her a bigamist. He's the one who needs to be arrested. What does he know about bigamy? In his section, Negro tenants don't pay the license fees to be married and divorced, that would just add more debt.

Gives Girl A Chance

"This whole thing is near peonage," the lawyer emphasized. "Surely no judge would be cruel enough to make this girl return to that man."

Deputy Earl Smith had entered the room during the discussion and became so disgusted that he interrupted the proceedings and declared that she shouldn't be sent back.

By this time, the sheriff realized that he had more on his hands than a charge of bigamy. He saw that the decision rested with him to give the poor girl her first decent opportunity. His decision? He told the girl to stay in Kansas City. He sent Deputy Earl Smith in a side room with Silas to persuade the old man to leave town. The old man left town.

Wednesday the girl got a telegram, supposedly signed by her cousin, which read, "Come back at once. You are about to be indicted. If you cannot come, call me long distance in care of (the name of the sheriff-landowner)."

But the young bride no longer fears telegrams and threatening letters. Proper legal steps have been taken to straighten out the situation. The Kansas City marriage has been annulled. Divorce proceedings have been filed against Silas. After the divorce is granted, the couple will be married again.

Meanwhile the girl has found a priceless treasure—loyalty, confidence, and faithfulness in the man she loves.

4-1942
Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

Students From South Eagerly Work In Fields

Leading Colleges And Universities Represented

By WILLIAM E. WEAKS
of Johnson C. Smith Univ.

GLASTONBURY, Conn. — One thousand college men from the leading Negro colleges of the country are employed in the tobacco farms of Connecticut this summer. And thousands of dollars are being earned by these men during this tobacco season.

Men are here from the following named colleges: Hampton, Morehouse, Virginia State, West Virginia State, North Carolina State, Johnson C. Smith, Tuskegee, Shaw, Elizabeth City State Teachers, and Lincoln Academy.

Money these men earn in Tobacco Land contributes immeasurably to their educational finances during the school terms.

THE COLEGE MEN IN TOBACCO LAND

The men who came North this year to work on various tobacco plantations found themselves in a rather serious and difficult situation. Living in a world of injustice and prejudice, they were involved in past incidents which they did not have responsibility in instigating. Realizing the social and economic conditions of this community as well as the presence of injustice and hate, as a group of young Americans representing six or more different colleges from all parts of the South they decided that they were going to live in the community like gentlemen and take an active part in civic programs regardless of prejudice.

They decided that they were going to enjoy every right that the constitution granted American citizens. With the leadership of Thomas Hawkins, assistant dean of men of Howard University, we moved from a summer camp which was dilapidated to a warehouse which had been converted into a dormitory, or center for the college men.

Mr. Hawkins came to our rescue through the Connecticut Council of Churches on the same day that we moved from the camp into the city of Glastonbury. Under his leadership we were able to make our new home a more pleasant and happy one. After a few days we had a recreation room fully equipped along with athletic equipment, such as, softball, softball gloves, bats, boxing gloves, volleyball, etc.

There was a plea for donations from the citizens of Glastonbury for the benefit of the U. S. O. We did our part one hundred percent as citizens of the town. We knew that the residents here were surprised. Their attitude was doubt changed quickly. We knew by the look in their eyes and the expressions on their faces that they felt rather badly about what they had said about us before they knew us. Pretending to be ignorant to the change in attitude we worked hard, conscious of the fact that we were being watched, and aware of the fact that we still had to act with intelligence.

PLAYED PART ON PROGRAM

On July the Fourth a community program was given at the park in Glastonbury. We played an outstanding part in the program. The College Men's Glee Club sang under the direction of Harold W. McCoo of Fisk University. Mr. McCoo's work has made him well known to the musical world.

The men played the (white) citizens of Glastonbury a softball game, but showed a wonderful spirit of good sportsmanship. There were also boxing and wrestling matches given by the college men. The people of Glastonbury discovered that we were real gentlemen. They know we are determining to enjoy every right the constitution guarantees. They know we are demanding respect and opportunities to participate in any activitiy that is sponsored in the community.

The Congregational minister invited Dean Hawkins and the Glee Club to be present at a program. Dean Hawkins was the main speaker of the day and the club furnished music. The Dean told his listeners very frankly of the essential things which make an all around community. He said, injustice, prejudice, discriminations and hate of fellow men must be expelled from the human heart. He reminded his audience that men must face the truth and realize that there is but one race, ~~cigar~~ human race, of color, and that is

Now that we have accomplished what we feel were the most important and essential things in the area of respect of our rights as citizens of this community, there is another important aspect of our welfare here which I think would be unintelligent for us to over look. It concerns a particular man, and when we think of him it makes us realize he is an American who believes in liberty and justice to all. There are some real Americans who believe wholeheartedly in the welfare of their fellow men. I have reference to none other than A. M. Silberman of Hartford, Conn.

Mr. Silberman is the treasurer of the Consolidated Cigar Corp. He is responsible for the college men being here in tobacco land. He has gone out of his way, as it were, to make the fellows feel as through they were at college. Mr. Silberman is fundamentally interested in our welfare. He makes it possible for us to work under wholesome conditions. He has made it very clear to his superintendents who are in charge of the tobacco plantation that the college men are to be treated as gentlemen.

We are led to believe that he is not only seeking the production of tobacco with our aid, but he is also trying to do his part as a real American to help meet the financial problems of hundreds of colored American college students, whom without such aid during the summer would have difficulty in returning to school.

To our friends and loved ones of the Dear old Southland, the problems there are the problems here. We are fighting injustice, prejudice and discriminations because we are unwilling to accept less than full freedom, justice, and respect. We realize that America cannot be preserved nine tenth free and one tenth oppressed. We shall continue to fight together under the leadership of Thomas E. Hawkins, who has the gift of inspiring harmony and team work among his fellows.

4-1942

Miami, Fla. Herald
March 19, 1942

NEGRO CHILD LABOR FLAYED

Investigator Says South County Problem Is 'An Outrage'

In a scathing report on negro school conditions, Basil Pollitt, attorney and member of a Phi Beta Kappa fraternity investigating committee, told the school board Wednesday that the child labor problem among south county negroes was "a shame, a disgrace and an outrage."

The committee, consisting of three men and two women, was headed by Dr. Robert B. English, who read to the board the findings of the group which has been investigating negro conditions since last fall. The report dealt particularly with purported employment of negro children for harvesting on the truck farms.

As the board members prepared to close the matter by referring the report to School Superintendent James T. Wilson for investigation, Pollitt demanded angrily that the members hear him out on the child labor question.

Says Board Can Act

"I'd like to discuss who enforces the law and who is responsible for its violation," he said. "There has been a tendency here at the administration building to blame the law's violation on Judge Walter H. Beckham of Juvenile court. I insist this board has the power to curb this outrage by enforcing the school attendance law."

Wilson, replying for the board, said the question of enforcement was a legal one on which he was not prepared to argue. The board, he said, has appointed a negro attendance officer for the express purpose of investigating school attendance conditions among the negroes of the area in question. Wilson then questioned English on the committee's connection and its motives.

English replied that the committee had no connections with any other group and that its motive was the improvement of certain "deplorable" conditions in the negro schools.

Will Retain Salute Style

"We merely want to make recommendations about improvements which should be made on the basis of what we found," he said. "We realize that conditions are probably better now than they have ever been for the negroes but there is still room for improvement."

At this point, R. P. Terry, board member, broke in with the remark:

"We're certainly happy to know that you people have only that intention, that you're not planning to stir up an agitation. We'd hate to think that while we're fighting the yellow man on the front that there are those attempting to create dissension among the negroes at our backs."

The board voted to retain the outstretched hand salute to the flag in common use at the schools after considering a suggestion from the Veterans of Foreign Wars that the gesture be abandoned as "too Fascist and Nazi-like." The board's action was based on the recommendation of school principals that the gesture was strictly American.

Miami, Fla. Herald
July 11, 1942

Favor Getting Bahama Labor

Importation of negroes from the Bahama Islands to relieve a possible labor shortage in harvesting Florida's next citrus crop has been recommended to officials in Washington, it was announced at Orlando Thursday.

Plans were formulated at a conference in Miami between the Duke of Windsor and representatives of the United States War Board, R. S. Dennis told a meeting of the Florida Farm Bureau federation's citrus committee.

One-half of the laborers' wages would be withheld when their permits for entry expired, Dennis explained. When they returned to the islands they would be paid the balance of their wages. If they failed to return, the remaining wages would be used by immigration authorities to send them back.

Dennis is assistant chairman of the state war board of the Agricultural adjustment administration.

FLORIDA

Ft. Pierce, Fla., News & Tribune
July 10, 1942

Recommend Bahama Negroes be Sought for Farming Work

ORLANDO, July 10—(AP)—Faced with a possible labor shortage in harvesting Florida's next citrus crop, farm leaders have recommended to Washington that negro workers be imported from the Bahamas for the season.

Plans were advanced at a conference in Miami between the Duke of Windsor and representatives of the U. S. War board of the agricultural adjustment administration, R. S. Dennis advised a meeting of the Florida Farm Bureau Federation's citrus committee.

Dennis, assistant chairman of the state war board of the AAA, said one-half of the laborers' wages would be withheld when their permits for entry expired. When they returned to the Bahama islands, they would be paid the balance of their wages. If they failed to return, the remaining wages would be used by immigration authorities to send them back, Dennis said.

Directors of the federation will meet in Jacksonville tomorrow to adopt a policy based on information gleaned at the two-day committee meeting here.

Miami, Fla. Herald
November 10, 1942

DADE GROWERS PRESS FOR AID

Rep. Pat Cannon of Miami Monday called on War Manpower Commissioner Paul V. McNutt a second time to hasten action in supplying south Florida's farm labor needs.

At the same time McNutt announced that the United States Employment service would continue recruiting workers in South Carolina for Florida's winter vegetable harvest, despite legal obstacles put up by South Carolina.

Another development in the none-too-bright south Florida farm labor prospect was a report by the Bahamas labor department that 7,000 agricultural workers are available on the islands to help on Florida farms this winter, if needed.

Cannon, in reiterating his earlier request to McNutt to speed needed manpower to the winter vegetable kingdom of south Florida, displayed a sheaf of telegrams and letters from growers in Dade county and the Glades area, indicating relief is not yet in sight.

NEW DIRECTOR

"Officials are working as hard as they can," said Cannon, "but there is a lot of red tape. I am asking that it be cleared away."

South Carolina's law requiring payment of a $500 license fee before labor can be recruited for work in another state is unenforceable against the United States government, Dr. Bowman F. Ashe, regional director of the War Manpower commission, declared in Atlanta Monday.

His statement and McNutt's indicated the federal employment service would continue recruiting labor in South Carolina as Florida farm labor, despite South Carolina's attempt to check it.

Ashe pointed out that if the state license law were applicable against the employment service, it would also be applicable against the marine corps, the navy and the civil service commission—"all of whom, in accordance with the prosecution of the war, are soliciting and recruiting workers in South Carolina for service beyond the confines of the state."

Joseph L. Keitt, who resigned as South Carolina director of the federal employment service when ordered to recruit labor for Florida, has been replaced by Robert Hines of the WMC's Atlanta office.

7,000 AVAILABLE

The Bahamas labor department asserted that 5,000 men and 2,000 women could be recruited, classified and transported to South Florida for farm work at the rate of 600 a week. One necessary condition, however, would be the relaxing of United States immigration restrictions now barring migration of such labor to the mainland.

The Dade county commission has expressed approval of proposals to import Bahaman negroes as farm labor. Organized labor has expressed opposition on grounds that the influx of such labor would depress wage scales here. Miami city officials have also opposed the project, indicating their fear that the laborers brought over to meet a critical situation would settle here, swelling the population group in which poverty and lawlessness are most widespread.

Miami, Fla. Herald
November 7, 1942

DISCUSS WAGES OF FARM LABOR

Growers Confer With Federal Officials On Way To Obtain Help

Agreement on a minimum standard for wages and working conditions is all that stands between growers and government transportation of several thousand domestic farm laborers into south Florida, it appeared at conclusion of a conference of farm interests and government officials in Miami Friday morning.

Several thousand workers are now available from other areas, growers were told, and the government is ready to provide transportation to south Florida. The cooperative agreement being sought, it was explained by Louis L. Rhudy, regional farm placement representative of the United States employment service, is the same as that which has carried workers into several other states for harvesting seasons.

It was reiterated that the war manpower commission is opposed to importation of negro labor from Nassau until the domestic labor supply has been exhausted.

No conclusion was reached at the Friday meeting, but both sides expressed optimism over an agreement within a few days.

Meanwhile, cautioned Luther L. Chandler, Homestead grower, farm interests should be "extremely patient" until the conferences are ended.

While Rhudy was conferring with the group here, a similar session was held in West Palm Beach, where Robert VanHeyning, FSA transportation representative, was outlining the program for growers of the Glades area.

4-1942
Miami, Fla. Herald
March 23, 1942

The Town Crier

Report On Employment of Negro Children Bares Field Conditions Long Deplored

By JACK BELL

I'VE just read the Phi Beta Kappa association's report, submitted last Wednesday to the Dade county board of public instruction, relative to widespread employment of negro child labor in fields south of Miami, and to deplorable conditions in many Dade county negro schools. It's a report airing conditions which thousands of sound-thinking Miamians have deplored time and again, and quite probably the board, unless prodded along, will ignore and soon forget.

BELL

"Negro poverty and lack of employment raise the tax rate for the whit population," says the report. "Crime congests the courts and chokes up the institutions, disease communicates itself to, and infects, the white community."

Now there, wiht possible exception of a few comma-faults, are facts we've had tossed at us by virtually every leading physician and jurist in the city.

The investigators, who inspected every negro school in the county during their three-month survey, go on to say that to reduce crime and poverty, "negro schools should be models in thrift, industry, self-control and obedience to law, and in health, sanitation and cleanliness. They should develop the "mens acqua et clara" (whatever that is?) in a sound body."

THEN came the really startling part of the report. The investigators found "a shocking . . . condition . . . in the south end of the county with respect to negro child labor during the harvest season."

Here's what happened day after day: Owners of big farms would send trucks down the road about school time, the driver offering hundreds of negro kids a quarter or 35 cents each to go work in a bean field or potato patch, instead of going to school.

It's a violation of the 1941 child labor act, a shameful, disgraceful blot on this community. That such practice should be in use, and not stopped by the school board, the state labor inspector, the sheriff or any other officials is . . . well, is pretty sad.

DR. ROBERT B. ENGLISH, chairman of the committee, told the board that of course his group can only recommend improvements on the basis of conditions as found.

And I do hope R. P. Terry, a member of the school board, and I think of the board of regents of University of Florida, was misquoted when he broke in at this point to say: "We're certainly happy to know that you people have only that intention, that you're not planning to stir up agitation. We'd hate to think that while we're fighing the yellow man on the front that there are those attempting to create dissension among negroes at our backs."

Now Phi Beta Kappa is the highest honorary educational fraternity in the land. All of the committee, Dr. English, Max F. Meyer, Basil H. Pollitt, Mrs. Joseph Barth and Mrs. Joseph E. McClain are vitally interested in obtaining the best educational facilities, as are Mr. Terry and other members of the school board.

So I do hope Mr. Terry wasn't intimating that Phi Beta Kappas, because they recommended better schools and elimination of child labor, were aligning themselves with the Japanese; or that our negro residents, thousands of whom have joined our armed forces, are on the same plane as the enemy yellow men. As a matter of fact, I can't see where anything pertaining to the war entered into the thing at all.

DR. GEORGE WALTON of Miami Beach has sent a clipping from "Horse & Hound," an English racing periodical which has been published regularly:

"That remarkable old lady, Mrs. Ellen Chaloner, who once trained a string on Newmarket heath, celebrates her 96th birthday Dec. 27. She is the widow of the famous jockey, Tom Chaloner, and mother of Tom, Dick, Harry, Phil and George, all well-known jockeys. She has outlived them all."

"I was privileged," said Dr. Woollard, "to have my ears boxed many times by this great horsewoman when I was a youngster riding on the English turf, for infraction of the rules of good horsemanship. I've seen her, at 60, take many a fractious thoroughbred, go out with it and return riding an animal thoroughly subdued, perhaps after she had broken two or three whips during the process."

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

Floridians Discuss Farm Labor Shortage

MIAMI, Fla. (ANP) —The shortage of labor in Dade County, in which Miami is the principal city, is so acute that vast crops grown here will rot in the field unless workers can be found to harvest them.

People usually think of this area only in terms of winter resorts but Dade County grows beans, peas and tomatoes on a large scale.

OCT 24 1942

JOINT MEETING

So important to the welfare of the county was the matter regarded, that a meeting of white and colored leaders was held in the office of the United States Employment service, with J. Kennard Johnson, general manager of the chamber of commerce, presiding.

Plans were drawn to conduct an educational campaign to acquaint people with the serious situation facing Dade County.

It was decided to appeal to the patriotism of the people and to urge that as a contribution toward food to win the war that they volunteer to work in the fields.

They will be paid for the work just as though they were regular hands but it is felt that there is a deal of idle manpower and womanpower here which could perform this service if sufficiently interested.

AMONG ATTENDANTS

Among those attending the meeting were James H. Callahan, manager employment service; F. L. Cox, chairman state vegetable committee; E. H. C. Steffani, county extension agent; N. P. Lowery, county commissioner, and Ellis H. Hollums, all white.

Among the colored citizens who spoke were Preston D. Byrd, Capt. James E. Scott, Atty. L. E. Thomas, Miss Dorothy Myers, Mrs. Eddie Daniels of the welfare board; Dr. I. P. Davis, Arch Robb and Martin Wales.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

DRAFT BOARDS TO DEMAND 'WORK CARDS'

Parley Decides Proof Of Job Must Be Given To Policemen

DEC 19 1942

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Outright proposal for forced labor on sugar and vegetable plantations for all able-bodied Negroes in this area was made this week by officials of the U. S. Sugar Corporation.

Under guise of a "work or fight policy," which would apply to colored men only, demands were made that all Negroes be forced to carry "work cards" similar to their draft cards. These cards would be issued by big farmers. All men who could not produce proof that they had farm jobs would be jailed for vagrancy.

The suggestion made by the sugar firm officials at a conference of more than 50 farmers, constables, state patrolmen, local police and representatives of the U. S. Employment Service and local draft boards was received favorably, according to Deputy Sheriff W. M. Motes.

Would Use Draft

Meeting in the Belle Glades Town Hall, the meeting brought out the admission by officials of the U. S. Sugar Corp., now under Federal indictment for violating anti-peonage laws, that they have already begun issuing "work cards," which all their employes must carry along with their draft cards.

George Yon of the corporation's South Bay plantation urged that other vegetable growers follow the same practice.

Draft board representatives pledged that they would induct every Negro who could not produce a "work card" but claimed that many would escape because of "Venereal diseases".

One farmer asked that officers simply load all loose men on trucks and "force them to work", but the deputy sheriff explained "this is still a free country".

The Nashville Globe

JOBS IN FLORIDA

The promise of "60 days employment at not less than 30 cents an hour" for Negroes, even when accompanied by the assurance that they will be guaranteed "a ride back home" does not appeal to us as being any wonderful exhibit of the way the "more abundant life" is being provided for these times and for the citizens of these parts. 12/11/42

However, that offer is being made to 75 Negroes who are willing to go to Florida for a stretch of 60 days. It is announced that there will be adequate housing and medical attention but workers must take their own bed clothing and cooking utensils, unless they will prefer renting these things. 12/11/42

Workers are being recruited to do harvesting in Florida, and whatever attractiveness there is in the offer is afforded by the fact the Federal Security Administration is behind the project.

The papers "don't say" why none of these good jobs is being offered to persons of Anglo-Saxon descent, many of whom we feel could do just as good work as harvesters as Negroes.

This racial discrimination should be investigated by the FEPC.

4-1942
Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

FARM LABOR

Alabama farmers, some of them at least, are complaining of an acute shortage of farm labor. That the problem is not local is indicated by a dispatch from Washington announcing that a conference of dairymen of eleven northeastern States has named a committee to confer with Federal authorities on steps to check the flow of workers from the farms.

It is easy to understand the exasperation of landlords on seeing their labor leave for higher paid industrial jobs. Insofar as it affects the ability to produce war essentials, the drain of labor from the farm is a blow to the national defense program. In viewing the farm labor problem, though, we should avoid approaching it in a medieval state of mind. There is in some, perhaps, still a trace of the old attitude inherited from the Middle Ages, when the farm laborer was a serf attached to the soil and forbidden to leave it. Denouncing the departing laborer as an ungrateful and unpatriotic wretch may not be altogether the best solution of the problem. For, after all, under our American system the farm laborer has the right of determining what he deems best for himself, of taking steps which he believes will better his lot even though such steps should cause him to cease to be a farm laborer. Our farmers themselves, though spurred by patriotic motives in responding to the demand for more food and other essentials to help win the war, are not totally ignoring the profit motive.

As for government action, that might well prove to be a two-edged sword. It is true, if the drain continues, the government under its war emergency might assign men to work on farms, as an essential defense service. Such government action would presumably be accompanied by something of the same solicitude for the economic welfare of the farm laborer as already manifested in the case of industrial workers. A militant farm labor movement in the South, sponsored perhaps by remote leaders unacquainted with local conditions, might be a lot worse than the passive discontent evidenced in the trend to seek jobs elsewhere.

The South's farm labor problem is rooted in the long-standing poverty of Southern farmers generally, in low prices for farm products that have been the rule for years. One way to help solve the problem is to let the benefit of good times on the farms, of better farm prices now prevailing, filter down to the bottom of the structure. Certainly, no one expects farmers to pay their hands any such wages as the factories pay. The advantage of relatively low living costs on the farm, of working under familiar and satisfying conditions, should go a long way toward offsetting the wage differential. But, with both farm prices and the cost of living up, farm labor can hardly be expected to stay satisfied with a wage arbitrarily fixed by tradition and local usage.

There are in the South plenty of wise landlords who have given their labor a break, even when there were no compelling conditions, and often have been rewarded with continued and loyal service. Sometimes, admittedly, the best that a good landlord can do is not enough to hold his workers in face of industrial competition.

One thing seems certain, and that is that the problem will not be solved, temporarily or permanently, by taking farm labor for granted, like the rain and the summer sun. There is hope for solution when we realize that the humblest farm laborer has the right to hope for better things, in food and clothing and living conditions. It will be a better day for all of us in the South when a prosperous and intelligent agriculture can do more for the man who grasps the plow handles and wields the hoe.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

Farm Labor Program To Reduce WPA Rolls

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Anticipating seasonal farm labor demands and the effect of a reduced supply as a result of the war, Howard O. Hunter, Work Projects commissioner, has ordered a "vigorous farm placement program" in each state. A reduction of 62,000 in WPA employment is scheduled for March, entirely as a result of this program. Tentative plans call for an equal or greater reduction in April.

"Large reductions in the WPA rolls of agricultural areas are a certainty," Mr. Hunter said. "We will close all our operations in some counties, as in previous years, where this is necessary to meet the demand for farm labor.

"The net reduction in WPA employment will depend largely on the number of displaced industrial workers needing our help in areas temporarily hard hit by conversion of plants to war production. Considerably more than 62,000 will leave WPA rolls in March for farm jobs, but it is equally certain that the need for employment will rise sharply in some cities and we cannot afford idleness when there is so much important work to be done.

"Our farm placement program will be thoroughly decentralized and will offer every possible assistance in meeting labor demands promptly."

WPA reemployment representatives in each agricultural county are to arrange in advance to meet local farm labor demands so far as workers are available. Proportionately larger reductions in WPA rolls are scheduled in Southern agricultural areas in March, with heavier cuts in northern states to follow as soon as justified by climatic conditions.

District WPA offices serving agricultural areas will have special reemployment representatives to assist in carrying out the farm replacement program, under instructions just issued. A close relationship has been established in each state with the farm placement service of the United States Employment Service, the bureau of agricultural economics, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and all the various agencies interested in agricultural employment.

It will not be necessary for farmers to go outside their own counties to check on the available labor, Mr. Hunter emphasized. In each agricultural county there is a WPA representative who works closely with the county agricultural agent, whose office is a focal point for farm labor demands.

During the last six months of 1941 more than 216,000 farm jobs were filled by WPA workers, according to reports of the WPA division of training and reemployment.

Houston Post
Houston, Texas

Importation Of Mexican Farm Labor Approved

BAY CITY, June 16.—(Sp)—Importation of Mexican labor, under certain restrictions, to relieve the Texas farm labor shortage, has been approved by the Manpower commission, Washington, according to a letter received from Ezra T. Benson, executive secretary, National Council of Farm Labor Cooperatives, by President E. O. Taulbee of the Bay City chamber of commerce.

In his letter to President Taulbee, Secretary Benson said: "We understand that the (Mexican) labor will be recruited in cooperation with the Mexican government by the United States employment service, and will be policed and returned to the border when the work is completed by the Farm Security administration.

"The question of transportation has not been fully worked out, although it now appears that the farmer may have to pay the transportation. Consideration, however, is being given to an appropriation to permit the government to transport the labor. Where it can be shown the shortage of labor has resulted from the war effort."

Approval of the importation of Mexican laborers to relieve the farm labor shortage, followed a vigorous presentation of the urgent need of such labor to harvest the coming crops, before Chairman Paul V. McNutt of the Manpower administration. Mr. Benson stated

Peoples Voice
New York, N. Y.

Time Magazine Flops On Publishers' Story

Time magazine in its June 15 issue took occasion to do an *Aunt Jemima* takeoff on the annual conference of Negro newspaper publishers held the week before in Chicago. *Time* devoted its space to what was perhaps one of the lousiest reporting jobs that Luce-published weekly has ever perpetrated upon its unsuspecting public. *Time* divided its badly-done news story among the Negro publishers, Pegler, Marshall Field, Adam Powell and PV. None got an even break. We quote excerpts from *Time's* story, with rebuttal:

Time: The smoke from big, black cigars supercharged the sticky heat of the basement cafeteria in Chicago's Wabash avenue YMCA.

Rebuttal: This sentence sets the scenery for Time and its attempt at a Negro-typed news coverage. "Big black cigars" is a classic. Time staffmen would catch hell trying to buy a black cigar anywhere. Golden brown leaf is used for cigars quite universally. Most of the publishers smoked cigarettes, all popular brands; some few were cigar favorers; a few more smoked pipes. "Supercharged the sticky heat of the basement cafeteria" further sets the Time tempo, to show Time readers that Negro publishers met in a non-air-conditioned setting, in a basement, all of which was quite unnecessary to factual reporting.

Time: A well-dressed, pipe-smoking Negro rose to address the third annual conference . . ." (Would Time have thot it necessary to report that, at a meeting of white men, a speaker was well-dressed? And is that news? The Negro mentioned was probably Roy Wilkins, Crisis editor. If so, Minnesota-university-educated Wilkins can run rings around Time publisher Luce when it comes to brains, deportment, carriage, intelligence.)

Time: His 75 listeners, full of fried chicken and Pepsi-Cola . . . "This is lousiest of all and hits an all-time low. All detractors of the Negro try to picture him as a lover of fried chicken, gin, razor fighting, etc.

Truth: there was no more fried chicken on the menu than any other staple food. Pepsi-Cola or any other cola is no particular favorite drink with Negro publishers, any more than they would be with Time publishers.

Time: "The publishers were smoking mad at 'that arch-traitor Westbrook Pegler . . .'"

Rebut: Smoking mad is an exaggeration. Negro publishers were concerned about Pegler's attack, realizing that he was serving as hatchet man for sinister and hidden forces far more powerful than a brass check polisher doing a poisonous column for a reactionary newspaper chain with one of the worst anti-labor records in the history of modern newspapers.

Time: (Speaking of Marshall Field, publisher of the Newspaper PM, Chicago Sun, Parade's Weekly) . . . he is also the backer of a Negro paper . . . the (People's Voice (to which last week he extended 'another $25,000 of credit.

Rebut: The People's Voice challenges Time to back up this sloppy piece of reporting by proving what it charges, instead of placing itself on record in black and white, by loose rumors. PV announces that it is published by Adam Powell and Charlie Buchanan.

Time: (On Adam Powell) ". . . pompous ball of fire . . . hot shot who would fizzle out in a year . . . new and slightly pinko kid who hasn't got his feet wet . . . poor imitation of Ralph Ingersoll . . ."

Rebut: Time covers up its stinko reporting by allegedly quoting Negro publishers on Powell, but Time fails to name its informants, if any.

Time: He (Powell) is a close friend of Harlem's No. 1 boogie-woogie manager, Charles Buchanan of the Savoy Ballroom.

Rebut: Buchanan is a legitimate business man probably earns more per week than anyone on Time's staff. Time tries to give the impression that Buchanan is likely to break out into a lindy hop exhibition on the slightest notice. Buchanan seldom dances, lives quietly.

Time: He (Powell) employs five secretaries and a liveried chauffeur.

Rebut: Abyssinian Baptist Church with 14,000 members employs five secretaries. A liveried chauffeur is neither here nor there, is not even news.

Time: As an exploiter of the war emergency . . .

Rebut: Reactionary Time considers it as "exploiting" when a Negro asks that the democracy we fight for abroad be likewise applied at home.

Time: . . . he (Powell) advocates complete world equality of Negro and whites.

Rebut: Powell advocates world freedom of ALL people without consideration of race, color, creed—principles upon which America was founded, the same America in which Time publishers flourish and in which democracy lovers battle against tory publications such as Time and its anti-Negro news stories.

—JLC.

Harten Hurls Defi

Militant Brooklyn Pastor Demands Justice for All Sharecroppers.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., July 16—"Our brothers and sisters in Virginia can't hold meetings in this fashion. They don't dare, but we are here tonight to protest the death of Odell Waller and to serve notice on the United Nations that there will be no victory until black Americans from the four corners of our nation's soil are given their rightful place in the scheme of democratic living."

Hurling this defi to an audience of 500 Brooklynites who attended a memorial to Odell Waller at the Concord Baptist church, Brooklyn, the Rev. Thomas S. Harten keynoted a full dress attack on bigotry and injustice against minorities Wednesday night.

A mixed audience heard Harten, a leading figure in the national affairs of the Baptist church, declare that "the Negro has pulled the white man out of every mess he ever got into," and demanded justice for "sharecroppers—black and white—who regardless of their position ought to be treated like American citizens.

Councilman Peter V. Cacchione, Communist leader, went on record with the contention that "ten percent of the American nation has not been brought within the orbit and the circle of American democracy.

"As long as America can treat 13,000,000 Americans as it does, what is our guarantee that in the future America cannot deal the same way with my race—the Italian people—with the Jewish people and in fact, with all minority groups, thus annihilating the democratic way of life," the Councilman demanded passionately.

"Hitler's vicious creed was not invented by the Nazis, but copied from the Southern Bourbons," Cacchione stated.

The meeting adopted resolutions condemning the Waller execution and sent them by wire to Governor Darden of Virginia.

Other platform guests were the Rev. George W. Thomas, pastor, Brown Memorial Baptist church; A. E. Eastmann, Isaac McFowler, John G. Brooks, president, Benj. F. Butler, Jr. Association; Dr. E. Mitchell Lee, Benjamin F. Butler, Jr., and the Rev. C. L. Franklin.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

No Need For Mexicans

THE suggestion of Gov. Olson of California, to bring into that state 40,000 Mexican farm laborers, seems unwarranted, in the face of farm labor conditions in this country.

Negroes of California and of the nation, do right to protest such a move, on the grounds of inexpediency and plain fool-hardiness, when we have hundreds of thousands of Negro farmers in the deep south available and who can be moved, and will work, and who need no integration or acclimating to the American way of life.

Negroes in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas, know something of the ill effects economically, of importing cheap Mexican labor to take their jobs. It happened to them on a large scale nearly a quarter of a century ago, and in many quarters Negro farm workers have never recovered from the effects.

Also there are several hundred thousand white share-croppers in the South whose conditions might be improved by the farm needs of the West Coast.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

Back To The Farm

Agriculture is a basic industry. Food is a need for which there is no substitute. With farms losing their labor to the draft and to war industries, agriculture is for those who would help the war effort now and find a secure place in the peace to come.

When the history of this era is written, along with the statesmen and soldiers who directed the fighting will be written the name of the farmers. So necessary are farm products, that any law proscripting labor is certain to assign workers to the farm in the same manner they now are drafted for the army. All the workers who crowd into the cities after the fat wage being paid unskilled as well as skilled labor, do not get it. Many of them are bedazzled by the sums made in peak weeks. They never stop to consider that there are other weeks when weather and shortage of material make them lose time.

The days are gone when the farmer fights alone. AAA and other government monies alloted are recognition of his importance. He will be given helpers whether they wish it or not. With this the situation, the far-seeing intelligent thing is for those who can farm, to go at it now.

The investment rule is to buy when others are selling, and sell when others are buying. Now when farm laborers are leaving farm owners stripped of help and discouraged to the point of quitting is the ideal time to buy. With the price right, and new farm loan regulations in force, acquiring a farm is largely a matter of wanting one. Tenant farmers, who fared so badly in the past, can make a shoestring purchase today and go on to complete ownership.

Especially do we urge a return to the farm by Negroes. It is the one place where they can work out their destiny with the least handicap.

We urge Negroes to return to the farm because many of them have farm backgrounds. The city has been none too kind to them. Between slum housing and low wages they will do better on the farm because they cannot do worse.

The farm is an independent business, with no labor union limiting employment, no hateful neighbors threatening peace and no prejudiced public refusing products because they are the work of black hands. We all hope for real democracy as the outcome of this war. But even if it comes, it will bloom better in some surroundings than in others. Instead of looking for full citizenship to be brought in, as on a platter, let Negroes go farming and create each his own little place of the utmost freedom.

The lush days of war production will end. It is wise to look ahead and prepare now for tomorrow.

Atlanta, Ga. Constitution
November 2, 1942

Their Special Problem

The farmers of the nation are facing a special, and very serious problem in scarcity of farm labor owing to the demands of war through the armed services and war industries. That steps will be taken to solve this problem is inevitable, inasmuch as maintenance, even increase, of food production is an essential of the war effort.

However, as pointed out in a letter from Tuskegee Institute, the famous educational center for Negroes in Alabama, the problems caused by war have borne with special weight upon a large segment of Negro farm families in the south. This is true both among Negro farmers who operate their own lands and upon those who are tenant farmers.

The draft of Negroes from these farms has been heavy. Many others are working in war production plants and still others, lured by reports of nigh wages, have drifted to the urban centers. Many of these are unskilled a[nd] unable to find employment as they expected, are still drifting. That they should be urged to return to the farms is, of course, evident, but it takes time to teach that lesson, even after they have been reached.

The result of all this is that, in many cases, only women, aged and dependent relatives and young children are left to work on the farms.

Tuskegee points out that, under these circumstances, Negro farm children in the south this year face a particularly bleak Christmas season. Large proportion will be in serious want, hungry and cold through the coming winter. The opportunity for the exercise of the spirit of the Good Samaritan, by both white and Negro people who are able to give to meet a little, at least, of this need, is exceptional.

Clothing, books, toys, candy pictures, or money with which these things can be purchased, will go far to make Christmas real for many a Negro child in a home ruled by extreme poverty. Such gifts should be sent to F. D. Patterson, president, at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Set Precedent For Farmers

NOV 14 1942

WASHINGTON, D.C., Nov. 12—Last week Mississippians set a precedent which may affect the future of the Negro in Agriculture in many important respects. Here's what happened: the nation's cotton crop was in danger of being lost, there were far too few pickers. The cry went out to the towns that unless pickers were obtained large quantities of cotton would rot in the fields. The town people became concerned. In a few days businessmen and women, teachers, ministers, doctors, newspaper editors and reporters pushed aside their own work and joined the cotton pickers' brigade.

Claude A. Barnett, special assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture, points out that this attitude on the part of Negro business and professional people will do much to help farmers understand the importance of their job.

Charleston S. C. News & Courier
November 4, 1942

NEGRO EDUCATION IN SOUTH ADVISED

Dr. Wade Tells Rotarians Skilled Farm Labor Key to Section's Progress

Improvement in the educational level of the state's negro population was offered as the key to the solution of South Carolina's labor and economic problems by Dr. B. L. Wade, United States regional director of plant breeding for the thirteen Southeastern states, in an address before the Charleston Rotary club yesterday at the Francis Marion hotel.

Joseph E. Jenkins, chairman of the club's rural-urban committee, introduced Dr. Wade, explaining that a large portion of labor in the state is negro, that low wages—averaging $73 a year for tenant farmers and $38 a year for sharecroppers—cause a flow of the highest type of laborer from the country to the city, and from thence to the North, and that as a result South Carolina is handicapped by having only the least capable element remain.

Dr. Wade was asked to speak and suggest means of correcting this situation because of his extremely wide experience in farm and labor problems, Mr. Jenkins said in his introduction.

Speaking from his personal experience in California and in this state, Dr. Wade said farming can be done more cheaply in California with labor at forty cents an hour than in South Carolina with labor at fifteen cents an hour, due to the higher efficiency of California labor, resulting from better education.

Blasting what he said was a popular Southern idea that raising the wages of negroes means merely that the negro works less, Dr. Wade reported that in work here attendance on the job was around 75 to 80 per cent when pay was at the prevailing ten to fifteen cents an hour, but that when wages were increased to thirty cents an hour attendance rose to 90 per cent.

Dr. Wade said he did not question the statement that Southerners as a whole like the negroes, but he declared that nevertheless the negroes are not given adequate schools. Negroes who have attended the schools provided here for three years without learning even to sign their names have been taught to write their signatures with five minutes' instruction in his office, the speaker declared.

No Husking Peg Found

Pleading for vocational training, he said that though the use of a husking peg increases efficiency about 50 per cent in husking corn, he was at one time unable to find a hardware man in Charleston who knew what a husking peg was, much less a negro who knew how to use one. Vocational training, by heightening efficiency, would raise the economic standards of white people here as well as negroes, he said.

First, however, adequate basic instruction in the "Three Rs" of reading, writing and arithmetic is necessary, Dr. Wade said.

Summing up, the speaker listed three movements necessary to improve the status of negroes, and thereby the efficiency of labor and the general welfare of the state.

These were vocational education, relief in health and housing conditions ("Many of the rural slums are worse than the slums in the city of Charleston, if that is possible," he said); and pay rates commensurate with skill and performance.

Referring to health and housing, the speaker said no man could be expected to work efficiently when he has malaria, is housed in such hovels that he is wet when it rains and cold whe nthe weather is cold, and is barefoot and in tatters. As to pay, he attacked the idea he said many employers have that no negro should receive more than a certain maximum regardless of the nature or quality of the work done. Pay should be given in accordance with skill and performance, he said.

False and unwholesome attitudes on the part of employers that negroes should be limited in pay and that they will quit work if paid more, combined with the resultant horrible living conditions and with inadequate edcuational opportunities, contribute to a shiftless, lackadaisical attitude on the part of negro labor which leads to inefficiency and lowered standards for the white race itself, Dr. Wade said.

Farmers and employers in California are foresighted enough to send the children of Mexican and other laborers to school even when the children are sorely needed for vegetable picking and other work, because the employers know that the efficiency which makes it possible for them to operate profitably comes from the labor skills and abilities permitted by education, Dr. Wade said.

Club's Visitors

Visiting Rotarians and guests were introduced, with Herbert E. Howard presiding. The former were Lieutenant Commander Hans K. Koebig, of Los Angeles, Calif.; and Charles C. McCubbin, of Jacksonville, Fla.

The latter were Laird James, guest of A. C. Connelley; W. M. Frampton, club guest, and four British sailors, W. A. Charnock, A. B. S. T., of London; William James Smith, of Kent; E. McGee, of Scotland, and Tom Cleanz, of London, guests of R. M. McGillivray.

A new group of high school students who will attend Rotary meetings during the next month was announced by Edwin Thornhill. Edwin Quinn, a member of the first such group whose period of attendance has just been completed, introduced his successors, who are Winton Starke, of Murray Vocational school; Bobby Matson, of Bishop England High school, and Harry Borden, of Porter Military academy.

One birthday, that of William P. Cantwell, November 2, was marked by the presentation of a flower.

Nathaniel G. West, director of the U. S. O. club here, was introduced as a new member and welcomed by C. Bissell Jenkins, president, on behalf of the club.

Other actions were the announcement of the "Fur Vests for Seamen" drive now getting under way in Charleston, with a request the members search out and donate any old furs they may possess to be made into warm garments for men of the merchant marine this winter; and the participation of club members in a ceremony following the meeting at which a patriotic war bond poster sponsored by the club was pasted on a billboard on Marion square.

Gadsden, Ala., Times
November 12, 1942

Inviting Starvation

The ignorance in Washington relative to the farm problem is absolutely appalling, as one may discern from two items appearing upon the same day this week.

One item related that the civilian meat supply would be cut another ten per cent, bringing the civilian supply to 70 per cent of the whole, instead of 80 per cent.

The other item related that the War Production Board, the War Manpower Commission and the Army and Navy spokesmen had issued a joint suggestion that the way to relieve the manpower shortage is to hire more Negro workers. (The manpower shortage referred to is that exisiting in industrial establishments.)

These items mean, first, that the food shortage is becoming increasingly acute, and, second, that it is proposed to relieve the situation by taking more and more Negroes from the farms and put them to work in the munition factories.

And this raises the pertinent and supremely important question "What are the people going to use for food?"

Even now, with a considerable number of workers still on the farms, there is an alarming scarcity of many essential articles, yet it is seriously proposed to systematically lure Negroes from the land and put them in industrial establishments.

In some portions of the South, where the lands are richest and most productive, Negro farmers are largely in the majority, and if and when the majority of these Negroes are lured away from the land, it is going to be tough on the stomachs of the people, in view of the fact that hundreds of thousands of white persons already have been induced to quit growing food and become consumers of food.

The fact that armies must have food long has been recognized, Napoleon expressing the idea accurately when he said that armies travel on their stomachs—and the some may be said of navies—yet Army and Navy men in Washington, who evidently are giving little thought to the fact that the boys at the front need food as well as weapons, join in the suggestion that Negroes be recruited by the wholesale when most of the Negroes are in the South and most of these are on the farms.

In view of the menacing situation in relation to the nation's food supply, with many articles already practically off the market, it does seem that the members of the War Production Board, of the War Manpower Commission and the Army and Navy spokesmen would seek a simpler solution to the manpower problem and quit cutting into the nation's food supply.

This solution is so obvious and so simple that it is absolutely astounding to find any one who fails to see it. Longer hours in industrial plants will solve the problem without robbing the nation of its food and imperiling its capacity long to support a mighty fighting force while supplying allies with essential foods.

What a spectacle; the food supply of the nation denied and American workers would gladly put in longer hours and keep down, down, down while those in the farms going, but those in authority won't have it that way. The worship of short hours has become a fetish in Washington and in order to preserve this fetish starvation is invited. Instead of permitting patriotic and willing workers to put in longer hours, they insist that short days shall prevail even if it drains every worker from the farms and leaves the nation without fowl or flesh or ample food of any nature. Fees are at the bottom of the evil. The worker who puts in extra hours doesn't add to the sums derived from fees, but when longer hours are denied and workers are tempted from the fields, fees pile up endlessly, though food does not.

What a spectacle; the food supply of the nation denied and hours and thereby help to win the war and keep down, down, down while those in the farms going, but those in authority insist upon drawing more and more persons from the farms where food is produced! have it that way. The worship of short hours has Human philosophy could plumb no greater depth become a fetish in Washington and in order of absurdity.

Charleston S. C. News & Courier
November 4, 1942

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Visiting Rotarians and guests were introduced, with Herbert E. Howard presiding. The former were Lieutenant Commander Hans K. Koebig, of Los Angeles, Calif.; and Charles C. McCubbin, of Jacksonville, Fla.

The latter were Laird James, guest of A. C. Connelley; W. M. Frampton, club guest, and four British sailors, W. A. Charnock, A. B. S. T., of London; William James Smith, of Kent; E. McGee, of Scotland, and Tom Cleanz, of London, guests of R. M. McGillivray.

A new group of high school students who will attend Rotary meetings during the next month was announced by Edwin Thornhill. Edwin Quinn, a member of the first such group whose period of attendance has just been completed, introduced his successors, who are Winton Starke, of Murray Vocational school; Bobby Matson, of Bishop England High school, and Harry Borden, of Porter Military academy.

One birthday, that of William P. Cantwell, November 2, was marked by the presentation of a flower.

Nathaniel G. West, director of the U. S. O. club here, was introduced as a new member and welcomed by C. Bissell Jenkins, president, on behalf of the club.

Other actions were the announcement of the "Fur Vests for Seamen" drive now getting under way in Charleston, with a request the members search out and donate any old furs they may possess to be made into warm garments for men of the merchant marine this winter; and the participation of club members in a ceremony following the meeting at which a patriotic war bond poster sponsored by the club was pasted on a billboard on Marion square.

Gadsden, Ala., Times
November 12, 1942

Inviting Starvation

The ignorance in Washington relative to the farm problem is absolutely appalling, as one may discern from two items appearing upon the same day this week.

One item related that the civilian meat supply would be cut another ten per cent, bringing the civilian supply to 70 per cent of the whole, instead of 80 per cent.

The other item related that the War Production Board, the War Manpower Commission and the Army and Navy spokesmen had issued a joint suggestion that the way to relieve the manpower shortage is to hire more Negro workers. (The manpower shortage referred to is that exisiting in industrial establishments.)

These items mean, first, that the food shortage is becoming increasingly acute, and, second, that it is proposed to relieve the situation by taking more and more Negroes from the farms and put them to work in the munition factories.

And this raises the pertinent and supremely important question "What are the people going to use for food?"

Even now, with a considerable number of workers still on the farms, there is an alarming scarcity of many essential articles, yet it is seriously proposed to systematically lure Negroes from the land and put them in industrial establishments.

In some portions of the South, where the lands are richest and most productive, Negro farmers are largely in the majority, and if and when the majority of these Negroes are lured away from the land, it is going to be tough on the stomachs of the people, in view of the fact that hundreds of thousands of white persons already have been induced to quit growing food and become consumers of food.

The fact that armies must have food long has been recognized, Napoleon expressing the idea accurately when he said that armies travel on their stomachs—and the some may be said of navies—yet Army and Navy men in Washington, who evidently are giving little thought to the fact that the boys at the front need food as well as weapons, join in the suggestion that Negroes be recruited by the wholesale when most of the Negroes are in the South and most of these are on the farms.

In view of the menacing situation in relation to the nation's food supply, with many articles already practically off the market, it does seem that the members of the War Production Board, of the War Manpower Commission and the Army and Navy spokesmen would seek a simpler solution to the manpower problem and quit cutting into the nation's food supply.

This solution is so obvious and so simple that it is absolutely astounding to find any one who fails to see it. Longer hours in industrial plants will solve the problem without robbing the nation of its food and imperiling its capacity to support a mighty fighting force while supplying allies with essential foods.

American workers would gladly put in longer hours and thereby help to win the war and keep the farms going, but those in authority won't have it that way. The worship of short hours has become a fetish in Washington and in order to preserve this fetish starvation is invited. Instead of permitting patriotic and willing workers to put in longer hours, they insist that short days shall prevail even if it drains every worker from the farms and leaves the nation without fowl or flesh or ample food of any nature. Fees are at the bottom of the evil. The worker who puts in extra hours doesn't add to the sums derived from fees, fees pile up denied and fields, food supply of the nation while those in ag more and more e food is produced! nb no greater depth What a spectacle; the food sup tion Board, the War Manpower Commission and down, down, down,

4-1942

GEORGIA

Atlanta, Ga. Journal
March 11, 1942

NEGROES BARRED IN GEORGIA CCC

Charles A. Coffin, CCC supervisor of the State Welfare Department, announced Wednesday that Negroes have been banned from enlisting in the corps in Georgia until further notice by order of federal headquarters.

Negro camps at Waynesville and Royston will be disbanded, Mr. Coffin said, and the enrollees, about 300, probably transferred to a CCC camp engaged in war activities. He said that at present there is a total of about 1,200 in eight camps.

Declaring that the Negro ban was merely part of a new policy of discontinuing camps not actively engaged in war work, Mr. Coffin said it will "be welcomed by the farmers of this state because of the acute shortage of farm labor."

White enrollments will continue, he said, revealing a March quota of 935.

Atlanta, Ga. Constitution
June 4, 1942

WORK BY NEGROES.

ATHENS, Ga., June 3.—During 1941 greater yields of food and feed stuff and other farm crops were made by Georgia Negro farmers, according to the extension service. More Negro farmers attempted the production of more poultry, hogs, milk, vegetables, fruits and other products.

Nashville Tenn. Banner
November 19, 1942

HOLIDAY CROP HARVESTING

THE scarcity of labor on Georgia farms, because of the large number of laborers that have been attracted to the far more remunerative war industries, accounts for an unprecedented aspect of crop harvesting in that State, which, it is said, is to be found, though to a less extent, in several other Southern States.

The cotton crop in Georgia this year is larger than that of 1941 by over 250,000 bales, but it has been found extremely difficult in that, as in the entire cotton-producing area, to obtain the labor necessary to pick the fleecy staple.

Voluntary aid is being solicited and to a notable extent being obtained. Holidays have been declared in a number of communities whose citizens, from old men to boys and a number of women, have dropped their business to go to the farms. In one place of 3,500 population it is said that 1,500 worked on that holiday to help the neighbors harvest their crop and that on that day nearly 500 bales were picked by the volunteers from that town.

Unpicked cotton is the farmer's heaviest problem in some parts of the South.

A correspondent of the New York Times in Barnesville, Ga., stated that in response to the Mayor's proclamation old and young, Negro and white, schoolboys and cadets of the military institute, pastors with members of their congregations, clerks and professional men joined in the community effort. To get the volunteers to the farms every type of vehicle, including the town's fire truck, was pressed into service.

Constitution
Atlanta, Georgia

Out-of-State Man Recruiting Labor Is Fined

OCT 7 1942

CORDELE, Ga., Oct. 6.—(AP)—Superior Court Judge O. T. Gower said today he fined a man listed as H. G. Weston $1,000 on charges of being an agent recruiting labor for work in another state without first obtaining a Georgia license.

He said he acted to protect labor-short farmers from raids on their help. Weston had obtained 11 negroes from farms in this section for work in a New Jersey company, the judge said.

Judge Gower said Weston waived indictment and paid the $1,000 fine. He said the accusation was a misdemeanor and the maximum penalty was a $1,000 fine, 12 months on the state farm and six months in jail, but that he had imposed the fine only on condition Weston would leave the state within 24 hours.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Chased Out Of Georgia For Recruiting Workers

OCT 17 1942

NEWARK, N. J.—(ANP)—Because a Georgia judge fined his personnel manager $1,000 for recruiting Negro workers for important war work at his scrap business here, Samuel B. Freedman has sent telegrams to President Roosevelt, Donald Nelson, chairman of the War Production Board and New Jersey members of congress, charging that the south is "still fighting the Civil war."

The personnel manager, Harold G. Weston, white, is reported en route to Newark after spending three nights of terror and intimidation in Cordele, Ga., where he had been sent by Freedman to bring back scrap spotters. Weston was sent south after Floyd Weaver, a Negro foreman of the Special Steels Compounding corporation, Freedman's concern, had suggested he be sent south to sign up workers to offset a threatened labor shortage here.

Peoples Voice
New York, N. Y.

Planters Using Gestapo Trick To Force Labor

OCT 17 1942

ATLANTA.—Pointing to the growing "work, jail or fight" edicts being issued in southern communities at the instigation of planters, Secretary Frank McCallister of the Southern Workers Defense League asked the Department of Justice to rule on the legality of such edicts.

Both here and in Barnesville the mayors have instructed police to start a drive on "vagrants," making them work, join the army, or go to jail. In Memphis, Tenn., the mayor ordered cops to stop people on the streets who appeared to be unemployed and arrest them if they were not registered with the USEmployment Service.

OCT 17 1942

Behind the Gestapo tactics stood rich southern planters and their efforts to defeat cotton pickers' right to obtain at least $12 to $14 a week. The pickers have been advised by the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (unaffiliated) to accept work only where they receive $2 per 100 pounds or 30c an hour.

OCT 17 1942

"Selfish planters are trying to drive thousands of Negroes to the cottonfields to pick cotton at their own price and they are using city officials to do it," McCallister said.

To prevent similar tactics by the army, the American Civil Liberties Union has protested a proclamation giving military authorities the right to remove from the Atlantic seaboard "any persons whose continued presence is deemed dangerous to national defense."

Demanding that such power be put in the hands of civil authorities, the ACLU said: "With such wide power it is easy for military authorities to act on mere suspicion of unlawful conduct which cannot be proved."

Daily World
Atlanta, Ga.

500 BTW Boys To Pick Cotton Today

OCT 15 1942

There will be no school today for approximately 500 male students of Booker T. Washington High School, but don't think these young men are going to have a holiday.

They are going to pick cotton.

Around about 7 bells this morning these youngsters will pile into trucks and ride to Henry County. There they will hike off to fields and fill their bags with cotton for which they will be paid at the rate of one dollar per hundrd pounds. The young cotton pickers are due to return to the school building this evening at 7:30 o'clock.

Several male instructors at the school will accompany the students to the cotton fields and will remain with them during the day.

Prof. C. N. Cornell, principal of the high school, explained that the venture is experimental and voluntary. He said students making the trip to cotton fields today are doing so on their own accord and that other trips may be conducted if the test today proves successful.

Principal Cornell added that the cotton-picking trip is under the sponsorship of the United States Employment Service and the Atlanta School System and is being done as a war-time effort to help farmers gather their cotton crops. A shortage of farm labor throughout the country has made it necessary for farmers to seek labor from the cities.

OCT 15 1942

Schools throughout the cotton states have been cooperating with farmers, and in some instances, entire towns have turned out to help the farmers pick their cotton crops.

Amsterdam Star-News
New York, N. Y.

FLED MOB IN GEORGIA

OCT 24 1942

Jersey Foreman Tells of Recruiting Peril

(Special Correspondence)

NEWARK, N. J.—Floyd Weaver, a foreman for the local Special Steels Compounding Corp., returned home this week after escaping from a Cordele, Ga., "lynch mob" last Monday while trying to recruit laborers for the purpose of bringing them to Newark.

"These people who tell you that Georgia's all right now", he told friends, "are all wet. Them crackers were really out to get me and, had it not been for relatives and friends, they would have come darn near succeeding."

Started Recruiting Men

Weaver and Harold G. Weston, white personnel manager for the steel concern, went South three weeks ago. Weaver arrived in Cordele, first, and started lining up "some good men".

Then Weston wired his colored assistant to hold tight until he arrived to make sure the latter had hired the right type of men. Everything went along o. k. until Weaver and the newly hired men were ready to leave.

All the known residents of Cordele were stopped at the railroad station and told not to leave town. A few others were pulled of the train when they attempted to defy the order.

OCT 24 1942

Threatened by Whites

Weaver was threatened by a group of whites gathered in front of the "colored waiting room" and Weston, the white man, was arrested and placed in jail.

Weaver's friends "smuggled him out of town" by auto, which allowed him to catch a train in another village.

Weston was arraigned in court, fined $1,000 and ordered to leave the state in 24 hours. He pleaded with officials to allow the War Production Board to settle the matter, only to be told (by the Judge) that: "This WPB outfit isn't going to dictate to this court."

Peoples Voice
New York, N. Y.

Two Escape Southern Anger After Vain Labor Quest

OCT 17 1942

NEWARK — "Although America is busily engaged in fighting a war for democracy, the sovereign state of Georgia still believes we are fighting the Civil War." These words from Harold G. Weston, personnel manager for the Special Steels Compounding corp., this city, told a *PV* reporter of the treatment he received at the hands of red-gallused, fish-frying, Negro-hating Gene Talmadge's underlings.

It all came about last week when the Newark company, which is having trouble in getting enough men to do the job of sorting metal for use in war material, on the advice of Floyd Weaver who is employed at the wrecking yards, told his employer, Samuel B. Freedman, that he knew a dozen men in Cordele, Ga., who would come to Newark if he could go down and round them up.

OCT 17 1942

Freedman sent Weaver marching down through Georgia and all went well until Freedman, as a final gesture of sincerity, sent New York-born Weston down to okay the selection of the men. Then things began to happen.

The men, plus Weston and Weaver, boarded the train for the trip 'nawth. The 'law' snatched them all from the train, threw Weston in jail and sentenced him to a year in jail or $1,000 fine for "decoying, enticing and transporting labor out of the state."

Weston contacted his employer after three days and the fine was paid.

OCT 17 1942

When the men were taken from the train, Weaver, wise in the ways of the 'law' in Georgia, denied he had any part in the 'decoying, enticing, etc,' which is one of the reasons why he is back on the job here. Had he admitted or had Weston told of his part in the affair, he might be pounding big ones into little ones by this time.

When Wetson arrived in Newark, he was met at the station by reporters who asked the usual questions but he refused to talk until he knew Weaver was safe from the toils of Gene's stooges. Once Weaver put in his appearance a little later, none the worse for wear, then Freedman and Weston let go with both barrels.

OCT 17 1942

Result: they will fight the case to a finish . . . where? . . . in Georgia? . . . not on your life The case will be fought safely under the shadow of the capital in Washington

WTW.

Time
Chicago, Illinois

How Not to Get Workers

OCT 19 1942

Samuel Freedman, who runs a scrap business in Newark, could hardly be expected to know what Georgia farmers are thinking. But Samuel Freedman did know that he was short of workers: he wanted to increase his hired hands from 50 to 70. When Floyd Weaver, one of his Negro foremen, suggested a recruiting trip to Georgia, Samuel Freedman was all for it.

If Floyd Weaver had kept his ear to the ground he might have heard Georgia cotton and peanut farmers grumbling: one-time farm workers were making $5, $6, $7 a day, and more, at war plants; long-opened cotton was standing unpicked in the fields; peanuts were languishing underground. Farmers, putting their wives and children to work, could not pick all the cotton, dig all the peanuts. They could not even pay farm hands $2 or $3 a day. They did not blame the workers, but. . . .

Floyd Weaver kept strictly to his mission. Traveling through peanut-rich Crisp County (150 miles south of Atlanta), he offered remaining farm hands $30 to $40 a week; hinted about girls around Newark whose boy friends had gone into the Army. After a week he had rounded up ten Negroes. He sent for Harold G. Weston, the company's personnel manager.

OCT 19 1942

One day last week Weston and the Negroes were standing on the station platform at Cordele, the county seat, ready to take the train. Along came the sheriff, arrested them all. Next day in court surprised Harold Weston found he was charged with violating an old Georgia law (passed in 1877), which aims to stop out-State labor recruiting by making "emigrant agents" register and pay a $1,000 fee in each county where they operate.

Flinty Judge Orion Thomas Gower, a strict disciplinarian, felt it was high time to hand down a lesson. He had lost his patience: it was ridiculous, he said, for the Government to ask housewives to save fats when thousands of tons of cottonseed oil and peanut oil were lost for lack of farm hands. He sentenced Weston to a year on a chain gang, fined him $1,000. The imprisonment was stayed on condition that Weston leave the State within 24 hours, stay out for at least 18 months.

In Newark, Samuel Freedman was outraged: "The South is still fighting the Civil War." He called WPB which sent a man to protest. Snapped Judge Gower: "WPB isn't running this court." Harold Weston thought it best to pay the fine and hurry home. The Negroes were released.

Newspictures

SCRAPMAN WEAVER
For his boss, a $1,000 fine.

It was just an incident in the nation's desperate and confused manpower muddle. Incidentally, just over the Hudson from Freedman's company in Newark, U.S. Army Engineers in Manhattan were signing up men for $35 a week plus board & room to work in Hawaii.

OCT 19 1942

4-1942
Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

LOUISIANA

ILD Probes Arrest Of Farmers' Union Organizer At Bidalia, La.

NEW YORK. — (ANP) — Upon receipt of a telegram from Clinton Clark, organizer of the Farmers union in Louisiana, reporting his arrest in Vidalia, La., and asking for help, the International Labor Defense last week set wheels in motion seeking to secure full and factual information regarding Clark's incarceration in the Louisiana jail.

According to I.L.D. officials, their investigations disclosed that Clark was arrested in Ferriday, La., and has been in jail at Vidalia since January 6.

He was picked up together with Ken Adams, another representative of the union, on charges of "obtaining money under false pretenses" and "using the mails to defraud."

The reports say the charges are based on efforts of the two men to collect dues by mail, which postal authorities claim they have no right to do.

An emergency defense committee set up in New Orleans has taken legal steps to secure the release of Clark and Adams. Meanwhile, the I.L.D. wired the sheriff of the parish jail in Vidalia and called upon all interested organizations and individuals to do likewise.

This move was made when the reports revealed that Clark's life is endangered by a lynch spirit which prevails in the community where he is jailed.

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla

MOB VIOLENCE FEARED AS UNION ORGANIZERS FACE TRIAL CHARGED WITH FALSE COLLECTION OF FUNDS

Rights of 10,000,000 Poor Whites and Negroes Involved in Louisiana Court Action

DEFENDANTS ALLEGE PATRIOTIC MOTIVES

BY HAROLD PREECE

HARRISONBURG, La.—(ANP)—Right of 10,000,000 Negro and poor white southerners to organize for the war program, will be at stake next Friday, April 10, as two Louisiana Farmers union organizers—Clinton Clark, 39, Negro, and Kenneth Adams, white—are brought on trumped-up charges of "collecting money under false pretense."

Warning of the lynch danger in this Louisiana parish across the river from Natchez, Miss., the International Labor Defense this week called for a deluge of individual and organizational protests, demanding that the two men be freed to be sent to Dist. Atty. Jesse McGee, Harrisonburg, La.

Negro and white CIO unionists in New Orleans this week rallied to the defense of the two sharecropper organizers at the same time that the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP and other organizations throughout the country were sending protests to Prosecutor McGee.

The New Orleans division of the Transport Workers union, CIO, announced through CIO representative A. Roy Pearce that it had secured an attorney for the two men and was trying to raise bail of $2,500 in order to remove them from the danger of lynching. Closely cooperating with the TWU in the case is the New Orleans division of the National Maritime union, CIO, which took the initiative in setting up an Adams-Clark Defense committee.

National President James G. Patton of the farmers union had denied that the two men acted under any false pretenses when they collected union dues from Concordia parish sharecroppers and turned them in immediately to the local treasury at Ferriday, La. Following their arrests, they were held without charges from Jan. 5 until recently.

Clark declares that he and Adams were arrested for organizing sharecroppers into cooperatives to produce more food the national war effort. In a letter to President Roosevelt dated March 15, he said:

"I was locked up—for organizing the poor farmer so that they could cooperate with our food production: by defense stamps, defense bonds, and do everything possible to help win this war"

4-1942
Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

Women And Men Sent To Farms

MAY 16 1942

Oyster Shuckers Out of Work Are Rounded Up

CENTREVILLE, Md.—More than one hundred colored men and women were forced by authorities on Saturday to accept jobs harvesting crops in this area. They were primarily oyster shuckers whose jobs had closed up last month, and they were reportedly drawing the customary unemployment compensation checks at the time of the roundup by police.

After the roundup they were called before a magistrate to explain why they continued to draw unemployment checks while "refusing" work in the fields.

"AGREE" TO WORK

It is not known if they were experienced in farm work, or if they were all physically fit for the heavy outdoor work, for which they have to assemble usually before daybreak.

They were told to help harvest strawberries and other truck farm crops on the Eastern Shore.

Available figures list, in all, 105 colored men and women as having agreed to take the jobs in the fields. Of this number, 101 were picked up on the streets here "for investigation" in a two-day drive directed by State's Attorney John P. Smith.

NORMALLY OYSTER SHUCKERS

MAY 16 1942

He said most of those picked up were workers in the oyster plants, which have closed down and who, since the industry ceased in mid-April, were eligible for jobless compensation.

Smith said that three men, William Langford, Fred Dorman, and Ivory Henry, white, had reported to him that they had been unable to obtain a quota of harvest workers.

They said that the fast-ripening crops were threatened with waste if not removed from the fields.

The unemployed workers picked up, Smith said, had continued to live at Kent Island Narrows.

CALLED LOAFERS

Smith contacted Linwood Moore, white, Queen Anne's County constable-at-large, who began the roundup on the streets. They said the men and women were "loafing." When stopped into custody.

MAY 16 1942

"We wanted to make an investigation whether there was fraud or misrepresentation in their receiving unemployment compensation while refusing to accept jobs," the state's attorney said.

NO TRIAL

There was no trial, only a show-cause action when they were called before Magistrate Meldin H. Robinson. They were asked why they were unemployed and to prove why they were entitled to unemployment compensation when jobs were available.

As a result, all of those taken into custody, plus four more, agreed to join groups working in fields, Langford getting 40, Dorman 35 and Henry 30 in their groups.

The men and women left Saturday for Bridgeville, Del., and Marion, Md., (Somerset County), where they began work Monday morning.

Norfolk, Va., Pilot
May 16, 1942

Concerning the episode in Centerville, Md., in which 101 Negroes were taken into custody and sent to harvesting crops.

Editor, Virginian-Pilot:

Does peonage raise its ugly head in Queen Anne County, Maryland? One naturally hopes it does not, but the article appearing in Sunday's issue of the Virginian-Pilot entitled "Negro Loafers Forced to Help Harvest Crops," is not encouraging, to say the least.

The article states among other things "that State's Attorney John P. Smith said three men, William Langford, Fred Doran and Ivory Henry, had reported to him they had been unable to obtain a quota of workers to harvest fast-ripening crops threatening to go to waste in the fields," and that after receiving the reports, "Smith contacted Linwood Moore, Queen Anne County's constable-at-large, who began picking up Negroes loafing on the streets." Continuing, the article quotes Smith as saying, "We wanted to make an investigation whether there was fraud or misrepresentation in their receiving unemployment compensation while refusing to accept jobs."

The article further states that there was no trial only a show cause action and that, "as a result all those taken into custody plus four more agreed to join working groups in fields, Langford getting 40, Dorman 35 and Henry 30," and finally that "the Negroes left for Bridgeville, Delaware, and Marion, Maryland, where they will begin work Monday morning."

In the first place, can one be expected to believe that an honest-to-goodness drive against loafers in a town the size of Centerville, Maryland, would result in the taking into custody of 101 Negroes and not a single white person? The answer is no, unless the police were looking for Negro loafers only.

But let us suppose that at the time these 101 Negroes were taken into custody, they really had cornered the market on this loafing business, having it all to themselves. Then let us suppose the situation reversed, with nobody loafing but white people, or if that is too much, then that the police should find as many white people as Negroes loafing. Now is one expected to believe that the white loafers would have received the same treatment as these 101 Negroes? The answer is no, unless and until we have more of democracy.

Moreover, if the arrest of 101 Negro "loafers" and not a single white one arouses one's fears, what of the law enforcement machinery in Centerville, Maryland? This seems enough to get 101 Negro "loafers" arrested or "taken into custody" while all the white loafers, if there were any, went scot free.

Finally, none of the fields in which these Negroes "agreed" to work appears to be in Queen Anne County where they were "taken into custody," some of them being in Somerset County, others Delaware, another State altogether, and all of them apparently so distant from Centerville that the workers had to leave on Saturday in order to be present for work Monday morning.

Well, this high-handed shuffling of more than a hundred helpless Negro laborers from one county to another and even from one State to another, may not be peonage, but in my humble opinion it is nearer to it than to anything that belongs in a democracy.

LORENZO C. WHITE.
Hampton, Va., May 11, 1942.

4-1942
Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

OWNER OF PLANTATION IS ABSOLVED IN CASE

MAR 10 1942

Alleged Malicious Prosecution Suit Remanded

JUDGMENT WAS OBTAINED

MAR 10 1942

Mississippi Supreme Court Frees W. P. Brown Of Liabilities On Grounds He Was 'Stranger To Proceedings'

From The Commercial Appeal
Jackson, Mississippi, Bureau

JACKSON, Miss., March 9.—A person's belief that certain existing facts constitute a crime when they in reality do not, does not justify the institution of a criminal charge against another, the Supreme Court held Monday in a Leflore County case involving alleged malicious prosecution.

"Such a belief, however, honestly entertained, will not shield from liability the person bringing the criminal prosecution," Justice Harvey McGehee held. "Probable cause cannot be predicted on a mistaken belief as to the law, unless such belief is entertained in reliance on the advice of a person presumed to be learned in the law."

Obtained $2500 Judgment

Newell Kisner had obtained a $2500 judgment in the Leflore County Circuit Court against W. P. Brown, plantation owner, and S. F. Jacobs, a rider on one of the Brown properties for malicious prosecution growing out of the removal of negro tenants from one of Mr. Brown's plantations. The Supreme Court absolved Mr. Brown of liability on the grounds that he was a "stranger to the proceedings," but remanded the case for determination of damages only against Jacobs.

Testimony was that during a dispute about whether tenants on the plantation had settled their accounts and were free to leave, Kisner and Dock Greenlee went in a truck to the Brown plantation to move some of the tenant families to other property.

Kisner was arrested, but subsequently released and found that no charge had been filed against him. He then procured through his attorneys his own further prosecution in order to obtain an acquittal as a basis for institution of the suit involved in the present case. Kisner was acquitted of trespass, and later brought suit for damages.

MAR 10 1942

Based on Testimony

Justice McGehee said that the trial jury's award of punitive damages was largely "based on testimony as to the financial worth of the defendant Brown, which should have been considered against Jacobs."

MAR 10 1942

The court commented that Jacobs "did not correctly believe that the acts complained of constituted a crime either at common law or under any existing statute charged against Kisner, nor did he mistakenly so believe on the reliance of advice of counsel."

"He (Jacobs) acted at his peril in having the plaintiff (Kisner) arrested and placed in jail for going to the home of the negro tenants at their instance and assisting in removing their household goods from the plantation," the court said.

MAR 10 1942

In another Leflore Circuit Court case, the Supreme Court reversed a slander judgment awarded Phillip P. Correro, Greenwood electrical appliance dealer, against the C. I. T., and remanded the case for a new trial.

Other opinions were:
BY JUSTICE ALEXANDER—

MISSISSIPPI
Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Former Landlord Leads Attackers

APR 23 1942

APR 23

PICKENS, Miss.—(S N S)—Terror reigned among Negro tenant farmers of this community following the severe beating of Ollie Hoover, Negro tenant farmer here last Saturday night, by Willie Joe Waites, and his brother-in-law following a dispute with Hoover, a former tenant on the Waites Plantation, over the $74.00 Farm Parity Check.

According to reports Hoover who is now a tenant on the Brook Burrell Plantation, received a Farm Parity check of $74.00 from his last crop while on the Waites plantation. Present when Hoover received the check from the Farm Agency, Waites demanded that he be given the check to cash and collect $18.00 owed him by Hoover. Refusing to give up the check Hoover promised to pay the $18.00 on Tuesday, after he had seen Burrell, his present landlord

After having had the dispute settled by the farm agency clerk, who advised him to keep the check, Hoover returned to his home.

APR 23 1942

Saturday night while attending a party on a nearby farm, Waites and his brother-in-law, and with guns stationed themselves at the front and back doors of the house and ordered all occupants out, when Hoover, the last attempted to leave by the back door, he was knocked down with a club and while one of the men held him at the point of a gun the other beat him with a club. Begging for his life, he was allowed to stand up, but as he stooped he ran into the darkness and was able to escape although several shots were fired, in an attempt to follow him one of his pursuers was severely cut about the head, face and stomach when he ran into a barbed wire fence. He was later hospitalized.

Following the incident several other tenants who had been afraid to go and get their parity checks, did so, afterwards remaining in their homes as protection against possible similar action.

According to reports, responsible local sources investigated the incident and have sent a full report to Washington asking for an investigation.

Hoover was treated in a Yazoo City hospital where his condition was reported serious.

Commercial Appeal
Memphis, Tennessee

FARM LABOR SITUATION NEARS CRUCIAL STAGE

Mississippian Says Test To Come At Harvest Time

Special to The Commercial Appeal

JACKSON, Miss., June 29.—"The induction of increasing numbers of young men from the farms into the military forces of the Nation and the employment of farm workers by wartime industries which are offering higher wages than farmers can pay are operating to bring about a serious farm labor situation," F. M. Greaves, chairman of the Hinds County War Board, said here Monday.

JUN 30 1942

Mr. Greaves said a special meeting of the war board was held Monday to consider the farm labor situation and that the board has sent a resolution to Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, director of the national Selective Service Board, requesting that "the greatest consideration be given to deferment of necessary farm labor."

"As farmers, we want to contribute our full share to winning of the war but it must be kept in mind that industry has made a heavy draft on farm workers. Unless something can be done to keep more of the workers on the farm, it may be impossible to reach vital Food for Freedom goals," Mr. Greaves said.

JUN 30 1942

The county board chairman indicated that while some dairy farmers are already hard hit by the loss of labor, the real test will come with cotton picking and harvest time. He said the board discussed the possibility of rural school recessing during cotton-picking time so that school children could help pick the cotton.

Indianola, Miss. Tocsin
October 15, 1942

Negro Paper Plans All-out Field Day

Under sponsorship of a local negro paper Greenville's colored population is planning an "all-out" Field Day for cotton picking next Monday October 19. With co-operation of several of Greenville civic groups and the U. S. Employment Service office in Greenville the Field Day is expected to move into the cotton fields for the day several thousand extra cotton pickers.

U. S. Employment Service is making a survey of all planters who may wish the extra pickers for that day and has issued a call to all farmers to register their needs. Transportation facilities wil be worked out with city interests and the farmers themselves.

Special loading zones have been designated in Grenville for next Monday morning and pickers have been asked to congregate by six o'clock. House-to-house distribution of hand-bille advertising the day and explaining how to get "on the truck" will be spread throughout the colored sections of the city; widespread newspaper publicity is planned and several radio programs will be presented.

Not only an appreciable amount of cotton be moved on next Monday by the Field Day but it is expected that several hundred extra pickers will finish out the season. Prevailing prices for cotton picking will be paid on the Field Day.

Greenvillee's negro Field Day i sthe first of its kind and for their interest and enthusiasm in harvesting the crop Greenvilles colored people are to be congratulated.

nicago Defender
hicago, Illinois

8 Cotton-Pickers Die In Mississippi Crash

OCT 24 1942

OCT 24 1942

POCAHONTAS, Miss. — (ANP)—A report of the state highway patrol revealed that eight cotton pickers were killed and seven others injured Monday in an accident on a bridge forming part of U. S. highway 49 near here.

Sgt. V. L. Saxon of the highway patrol said the collision involved a truck loaded with cotton pickers bound for the fields at Indianola and another conveying cottonseed. No charges have been lodged against the drivers pending further investigation.

Four of the dead were mangled beyond identification but the others were identified as Bert Smith and his wife, Will Roy Strong, and Quilley Henley, all of Hazelhurst.

The injured workers suffered only slight bruises and lacerations. They were released from a nearby hospital after first aid had been administered.

OCT 24 1942

Although exact cause of the accident has not been established it was learned that the truck in which the cotton pickers were riding had been fitted with a bench along each side, and that a corner of the other truck raked one of the benches. Despite the force of the impact neither vehicle overturned.

Authorities are awaiting arrival of families of the dead pickers to make identification.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

U. S. Intervention Asked In Mo. Case

Planters Accused Of Beating Race Union Member

FEB 28 1942

Prosecutor Says Federal Authority Will Be Respected

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An investigation just completed by McCallister revealed that prominent local planters and a former city alderman were involved in the attacks.

The first meeting held here January 15 in the hall of the Operating Engineers (AFL) was broken up by planters, and the STFU organizer, W. M. Tanner, was escorted from the meeting after being threatened with death if he returned. At the second meeting, January 23, in the same place, Tanner was protected during the meeting by local peace officers, and was taken toa nearby town after the meeting, but Scottie Spears, Negro member of the STFU, was beaten by a mob as he was leaving and narrowly escaped death. Two shots were fired at him as he fled.

CAN'T PROMISE PROTECTION

FEB 28 1942

Claude F. Cooper, [illegible]neville Arkansas, attorney, and Mr. McCallister conferred here on February 11, with Robert Hawkins, local prosecuting attorney and peace officer. They were advised that the prosecutor would entertain any charges filed, but that he could not guarantee safety of witnesses in any trial held here and he predicted that any effort to hold a trial would result in a mob of planters breaking it up and attacking the witnesses, prosecutor, union attorney and other interested parties.

Cooper and McCallister were both warned by County Prosecutor Hawkins that their own lives were in jeopardy if they persisted in pressing these charges. Hawkins also said that the planters had no respect at all for local or state authorities, and that even if the Governor came down there he couldn't hold a peaceful trial in these cases and the "only authority they would respect was that of the Federal government."

During the investigation McCallister was told by one of the state patrolmen in the district that he and the other patrolmen stationed there were told by their superior officer "to get out of town and stay out" on the occasion of both meetings.

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Gov. Forest C. Donnell of Missouri is being asked to make an immediate investigation to find why it is impossible to hold a trial in Pemiscot County without the lives of witnesses for the state being in jeopardy.

H. L. Mitchell, STFU secretary.

POLICE ESCORT FAILS TO PROTECT

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.
FEB 14 1942

CARUTHERSVILLE, Mo., Feb. 12—(ANP)—For the second time in as many weeks, mob violence was used by Missouri planters against a meeting of the union of sharecroppers—this time in the form of a public beating and attempt to kill Scotty Spears, member of Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, following a meeting held under police protection in an AFL union hall here last Friday.

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MAY 16 1942

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Daily World
Atlanta, Ga.

Sharecroppers In Desperate Fight For Living Wage

30 Cents An Hour Is New Demand of Men

MAY 26 1942

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In this section, where the average wage is from 75 cents to $1.00 a day for farm workers, there are some instances where $1.25 is top wages.

Demanding 30 cents an hour for farm workers and a 10 hour day, the union is making a drive in this section to secure this benefit for colored and white farmers who are united in an effort to secure these advantages. Time and a half for over time is also asked with 45 cents an hour as the basic wage for tractor operators.

MAY 26 1942

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Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

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The workers are willing to pick sharecroppers and farmers to the crops and work the land, but stand firm in their demands for not the prices they formerly re- the 30 cents an hour wage and to ceived. They want more consid- not move until these demands are eration for themselves and for met. They laugh at the attempt-

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Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

Trouble Stirs at Sikeston, Mo., Over Cotton Chopping Wages

MAY 29 1942

SIKESTON, Mo. — This town where Cleo Wright was lynched last January is determined to keep Negroes "in their places."

C. L. Blanton, editor of the Sikeston Standard in his "Pole Cat Column," last Friday indicated that Negroes have been getting "too independent and impatient."

He said: "It has been suggested that it would be a good idea to keep handy, just in case Negroes get too independent and impatient, an axe handle, a grubbing hoe handle or a p-elm club. In the hands of a man who knows how to wield either of the above they prove mighty dependable."

This comment probably was promoted by a strike of cotton choppers last week. Negroes of Sikeston turned down offers to chop cotton for $2 a day, holding out for 30 cents an hour for 10 hours and with time and a half for overtime.

Plantation operators sent three trucks into the Sunset addition where the Negroes live and where Cleo Wright was lynched last January 25. The trucks left empty, the drivers unable to induce Negroes to work for the $2 wage.

Sunset had been flooded the day before with pamphlets published by the C. I. O. Cotton Choppers' union urging Negroes not to work for less than 30 cents an hour.

Choppers in Charleston also refused to work until their demands were met. In Pemiscot county, however, it was reported that there was more jobs than labor. The pay there was $1.75 and $2 an hour.

The whites of Sikeston resented the fact that Negroes are demanding more money.

The editor of the Sikeston Standard, also made these comments in his column:

"When a man or woman refuses to chop cotton for $2 per day his or her name should be turned in to the Red Cross so when a call for food comes this winter no help will be given."

"Something should be done about the oath taken by cotton choppers at the Charleston meeting that they would refuse to chop cotton unless paid 30 cents an hour and price and a half for overtime. The names of these fellows should be taken and saved until the coming winter when they will be seeking commodities for self and families, then turn them down cold."

Editor Blanton, who following the lynching of Cleoe Wright here, said that Wright deserved lynching, indicated in his column that something worse than lynching might take place in Sikeston if the cotton chopping strike grows into an "uprising."

He said:

"Word has reached this office, via grapevine telegraph, that Negroes in Mississippi county have picked out several farms that they intend to take just as soon as the "uprising" takes place.

"This sort of talk is what causes massacres and since the big meeting held in Charleston recently where those members of the Union took a solemn oath not to chop cotton for less than 30 cents an hour, it is high time the farmers get ready to protect themselves. Should Negroes in Southeast Missouri attempt to take land by force then the Cleo Wright lynching would be classed as a very mild incident."

Amsterdam News
New York, N. Y.

Sharecroppers of Both Races Unite to Improve Conditions

JUN 13 1942

ST. LOUIS—The lowly, hard-working sharecropper, the "forgotten man" of progress in America, seems to have awakened to his plight at long last with the announcement from responsible quarters in this city that Negroes and whites who till the soil for pittances from tenant farmers are formulating a plan whereby their standards of living will be raised to levels commensurate with costs of consumption in this area.

This section, designated as "the beethill area" flares with controversy resulting from the attempted unification of labor interests.

Pressure allegedly has been brought to bear, the sharecroppers claim, to keep them in the low income brackets and increase their output. The action taken by the disgruntled workers is seen as in keeping with trends of similar nature throughout the nation.

In this area $1.25 is considered top per diem wages. The average wage is 75 cents to $1 per day. Union officials are demanding 30 cents an hour and a 10-hour day limit for the farm workers. Time and a half is asked for overtime, if any, with a 45-cent an hour basic wage for tractor operators.

No Shortage

There is no shortage of farm workers. Men, Negro and white, are willing to work the land—but not for the extremely low wages they have been getting. They seem determined to win for themselves and their families wages with which they can meet the rising cost of living.

The belief among the workers is that the pressure and the spotlight being turned upon their refusal to enter the fields is a concerted effort by landed farmers to make the nation feel that the workers are not doing their best to win the war. On the other hand, the farmers themselves claim that agricultural bottlenecks are being created which will require many months to clear up.

4-1942
New York Times
New York, N. Y.

LEWIS IS ASSAILED BY FARMERS UNION

Organizing Agriculture Is Own Responsibility, Not Labor's or Business's, It Says

MAY 11 1942

DENVER, May 10—Support during wartime of organized labor's bargaining rights, short of the strike, and a declaration that farmers should be organized by farmers, not by labor or by big business, were highlights of a statement on labor policy issued today by James G. Patton, president of the National Farmers Union, with the approval of the organization's officers. The board of directors held its regular quarterly meeting here yesterday and today.

In part the statement read:

"In recent months the National Farmers Union has been frequently asked about its attitude toward organized labor. More recently and particularly, such inquiries have referred to the widely publicized intent of District 50 of the United Mine Workers of America to finance, direct and promote the organization of a union of dairy farmers. This statement is an answer to both types of inquiries.

"The National Farmers Union has, since its formation in 1902, been friendly and cooperative toward organized labor.

"Labor has not and, in my judgment, cannot give up the right to bargain for wage adjustments necessary to keep up in fair measure with rises in living costs, using all bargaining resources short of the right to strike, already relinquished. Similarly, on the farm side, I do not see how farmers can give up the principle that the prices of the products they sell must continue to be related to the prices of the goods they must buy. Farm prices are the working farmer's wages.

MAY 11 1942

"I do not believe this position is inconsistent with the President's indivisible seven-point program for preventing further inflation.

"Cast-iron ceilings on wages have been proposed by noisy anti-labor voices and some sincere and normally liberal persons. The plan has been defeated again and again. Similar ceilings for farm prices have been proposed and defeated. The President has never proposed such ceilings and does not now propose them. Those who insist that his seven-point program be started by nailing down wages and farm prices first are going at the job backward. If reactionary forces in and out of Congress count on making the anti-inflation drive a snipe hunt, labor and farmers cannot be left holding the sack of sacrifice.

"Now as to the recent organizing activities in the dairy farming field carried on by District 50 of the United Mine Workers of America: It appears that when certain groups of hard-pressed dairy farmers are taken over or re-organized under various names they are affiliated with District 50. This sprawling off-shoot is in turn under the active direction of the ambitious president of the United Mine Workers of America.

"This attempted invasion of the farm field does not have the approval and sanction of the C. I. O.

"We draw these conclusions and offer them to farmers, labor and the consuming public, including Mr. Lewis:

MAY 11 1942

"It is the responsibility of farmers to organize themselves. It is not the responsibility of labor or big business or any one outside of agriculture to organize farmers.

"The control of a farm organization should be in the hands of farmers. They must build it, pay for it, own it, use it for themselves.

"When farmers and consumers decide to stop the milk trust skimming off the cream from the milk business dairy farmers will not turn to the peculiar talents of Mr. Lewis in hope that he can magically open up a market."

Farmers Union Hits Poll Tax

Daily Worker
N.Y., N.Y.
Nov. 20 1943

By Mac Gordon

OKLAHOMA CITY, Nov. 19.—Immediate passage of the Geyer-Pepper anti-poll tax bill, which poll tax Senators are now trying to filibuster to death, was demanded today by the National Farmers Union in the closing session of its 38th annual convention here.

The convention hit, at the same time, "all efforts which weaken or destroy the rights of working farmers or working people generally, especially those efforts to deprive the workers of this country of hard-won protections they now have." The convention pledged the union to assist labor in "efforts to strengthen the war effort."

The program adopted by the convention today "rejected defeatist talk that necessary war-time controls . . . mean dictatorship" and pledged full support to the President. It urged prosecution of obstructionists who hampered the war effort "for private gain."

Demand for passage of the Pepper-Tolan war mobilization bill highlighted a series of planks in the program dealing with production problems. Specifically, in the field of agriculture the program proposed expansion of the Farm Security Administration and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, urged that farmers producing non-essential crops be required to shift to "war-vital" materials, suggested incentive payments for production of badly-needed, underproduced crops, and urged, also, extension of crop insurance for war-vital crops.

RAISE STANDARDS

The program insisted that, while sacrifices will have to be made, low-income farm families must have their standards raised if they are to increase productivity. It insisted, as well, that the farmer must get a living return for his crop if he is to produce the maximum, and demanded parity prices. It stated emphatically, however, that it wanted no more than parity. This was a slap at the "farm bloc" in Congress and at the leaders of the Farm Bureau Federation who had threatened the President's anti-inflation program by demanding more than parity.

The convention also hit the new tax bill, recently passed by Congress which includes the five per cent "Victory" tax on all incomes above $12 a week. The farmers demanded a tax bill based on ability to pay, which would take all war profits, would abolish exemption of government securities, and include a $25,000 limit on all net personal income. It declared its opposition to a sales tax.

A good deal of attention was given both to the need for and the needs of farm labor. With regard to the first, the convention declared that only an over-all manpower plan as embodied in the Pepper-Tolan bill could fully solve the problem. It requested, however, that all farm workers be deferred from the draft until an over-all plan is worked out.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

It urged the federal government to enforce minimum protection for farm labor through subsidy and wage stabilization, and the extension of all social security provisions to farmers and farm workers.

The union requested representation of farmers on all rationing boards in farm areas, and on all other local war boards. It requested, also representation in the administration of the agricultural war program.

It went on record favoring representation by organized farmers and organized labor at the peace table, after "decisive victory" should be won, and urged immediate state of peace aims. The full participation of the United States in the councils of the nations after the war and an end to isolationism, economic as well as political, was advocated by the delegates, who hail almost entirely from the agricultural regions of the Middle West.

A whole series of planks dealing with establishment of economic and political democracy after the war and the safeguarding of our political rights today was included by the convention in the platform.

A special resolution was adopted expressing gratitude to the three branches of organized labor, to the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, to the Federal Council of Churches and the Catholic Rural Life Conference, for their cooperation with the Union in joint struggles last year, and pledging to continue and strengthen that cooperation.

Another decision was to launch a powerful organization drive to make it clear that the organization is the "unquestioned leader and spokesman for the working farmers of America." There are 105,000 farm families in the union now.

Tonight this war-conscious progressive farmers' convention will wind up with the election of a vice-president, a secretary-treasurer and one member of the Board of Directors. The terms of the other officers do not expire this year. H. D. Rolph of Colorado, present vice-president, is certain of re-election as sole nominee for the post. The same holds true for K. W. Holmes of Wisconsin, who will succeed himself as a director. Secretary-Treasurer J. M. Graves of Oklahoma, however, faces a fight from Emil Loricks of South Dakota, to retain his job.

Farmers Cheer Plea To Crack Filibuster

Daily Worker
N.Y., N.Y.

By Mac Gordon
(Daily Worker Staff Correspondent)

OKLAHOMA CITY, Nov. 18.—A powerful plea for the abolition of the poll tax was made before the delegates of the National Farmers Union convention today by Gerald Harris, president of the Alabama state organization of the union.

Nov. 19, 1943

Harris pointed to the fact that prominent opponents of the legitimate demands of the farmers were poll tax congressmen now attempting to filibuster against the anti-poll tax bill in the Senate. He pointed out that farmers had no way of influencing their representatives in Congress in the poll tax states because they didn't have the vote.

In Alabama, he said, before the introduction of the poll tax in 1902 the small hill farmers had a lot of political power. Since then, however, they have been powerless.

He appealed to the delegates to help the Southern farmers cast the poll tax burden off their backs.

PATTON IN FIGHT

The National Farmers Union has seen abolition of the poll tax as part of its program for several years, and its president, James G. Patton, is a member of the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax.

A note of opposition to Harris' plea was struck, however, by Yvon Ford, president of the newly-created Mid-Southern organization of the union. Ford, a former Mississippi state senator, dragged out the old States' rights argument, and attempted to defend Senators Bilbo and Doxey of Mississippi as friends of the small farmers.

Both President Patton in his report on Monday, the opening day of the convention, and W. M. Thatcher, national legislative chairman, in his report last night, mentioned the abolition of the poll tax as one of the goals of the union.

The legislative chairman also described, in his report, the secret meeting organized by Eric Johnson, President of the United States Chamber of Commerce, of certain reactionary leaders of large farm organizations to conspire against the President's anti-inflation program. The meeting was called by C. E. Babcock, President of the National Council of Farm Cooperatives, ostensibly to discuss legislation affecting the cooperatives. Instead, Thatcher said, it was a bitterly anti-labor, anti-Roosevelt session, led by Johnson and devoted to the task of embarrassing the President and hamstringing labor. Delegates from farm cooperatives had been brought there under false pretenses, he charged, yet the meeting was supposed to be proof of the fact that the farmers were in revolt against the President's program.

Thatcher reviewed legislative developments affecting the farmer during the past ten years, and dwelt at length with the principles of a farm and a peoples' program for prosperity and security after the war. He listed the following four points for reorganization of our war administration:

1. Dismissal of all dollar-a-year men.

2. Creation of an over-all war board composed of "proven public servants."

3. Greater representation of working farmers and industrial labor in advisory circles.

4. Consolidation of all war time governmental functions under an over-all board.

The convention was also addressed last night by C. B. Baldwin, National Farm Security Administrator. Baldwin presented an excellent program for greater utilization of present farm facilities and farmers—through instruction in modern, efficient methods of cultivation and husbandry; through expansion of credit facilities to farmers who haven't the capital to expand but can handle more; through resettlement of farmers from poor land to good, unused land, and through the importation of Mexican and other Latin American labor. The FSA Administrator stated that his agency has helped half a million families increase their production many times the quotas assigned them.

SEEDS FOR RUSSIA

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Farmers Union Backs War Economy Plan

The Worker
4
N.Y., N.Y.
Nov. 22, 1943

By Mac Gordon
(The Worker Staff Correspondent)

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.—Last Tuesday on the second day of the 38th annual convention of the National Farmers Union here, the Oklahoma City Times carried an editorial on the election results that seemed to be directed at the delegates to the convention. "Rural America is now definitely on the march against New Deal domestic policies" was the gist of the editorial. It went on to describe New Deal domestic policies, including, of course, all the internal economic measures for total war.

This is not cited because it is novel. On the contrary, we are commenting on it because it expresses the uniform policy of reaction and obstructionism throughout the country—to organize the farmers as a base for the attack upon labor and the total war effort.

It is because of this tactic that the National Farmers' Union convention, held here this week, is so extremely significant.

BACKS PRESIDENT

The union is the only one of the three major farm organizations that has supported the President's all-out war policies. The leaders of the other two, the Grange and the Farm Bureau Federation, have worked closely with the Congressional obstructionists. Both organizations are dominated politically by Edgar A. O'Neal, president of the Farm Bureau and a favorite of the Chicago Tribune, chief newspaper of the nation's defeatists. O'Neal is again echoing the demands of his friends that all progressive labor legislation be repealed.

The convention of the Farmers' Union is not yet completed at this writing. But its main outlines are already clear from the convention reports. **It has done an outstanding job in adding its voice to that of labor for an all-out war economy and for unity behind our national administration in this people's war.**

MAIN FEATURES

Here are a few of the central features of the convention:

1. Every leading report stressed the need for the Tolan-Pepper War Mobilization bill to solve the manpower, farm machinery and every other problem of increasing production. The union leaders stressed the fact that only the over-all planning of manpower and materials distribution on a centralized basis for all phases of the war effort, as is provided for in the Pepper-Tolan bill, could help the farmer solve his problems.

2. The stress on unity with labor dominated the proceedings. The leaders reported time after time that they and all three sections of labor—AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods—were working closely together for the mutual benefit of both, for the benefit of the nation and of the cause of the United Nations. The union has a full time labor relations director, Paul Sifton, who gave a special report on this.

This unity has brought profound results, it saved the Farm Security Administration, thereby enabling that agency to proceed with its exceedingly valuable work of bringing back into production many run-down, bankrupted farms. It won the release of 125,000,000 bushels of government-owned wheat for feed purposes at 85 per cent of corn price parity, over the objections of those so-called farm leaders who speak for the speculators. It licked the obstructionists in the anti-inflation fight.

FIFTH COLUMN

3. The convention pointed the finger at those farm leaders who are sabotaging our war effort by still clinging to a program of scarcity and of driving out the family-sized farmer despite the need for the greatest amount of agricultural production. It labelled these "spokesmen for the large, commercial-type, factory farm" and fifth columnists in America, singling out especially O'Neal and the heads of the Grange and the National Council of Farm Cooperatives who support him.

4. It listed a number of other achievements in the direction of increased agricultural production. For instance, national legislative director, M. W. Thatcher reported that the NFU was responsible for stabilizing flax prices and bringing 1,500,000 new acres under cultivation. Flax is the source of linseed oil, vital for guns, ships and planes.

It must be said, however, that these most distinct contributions of the convention were somewhat blurred by certain other tendencies, as the only national farm body supporting the nation's all-out war policies, has the job of rallying all the struggle for victory, the NFU, at least as reflected in the reports the relation of the Farmers Union the farmers of the nation in sup- to the great mass of farmers not port of these policies. in its ranks, including those in the Despite these weaknesses, the Farm Bureau and the Grange. In convention has already indicated to date.

BLURRED ISSUES

First, it has not clearly defined

Farmers Cheer Plea To Crack Filibuster

Daily Worker
N.Y., N.Y.

By Mac Gordon
(Daily Worker Staff Correspondent)

OKLAHOMA CITY, Nov. 18.—A powerful plea for the abolition of the poll tax was made before the delegates of the National Farmers Union convention today by Gerald Harris, president of the Alabama state organization of the union.

Nov. 19, 1943

Harris pointed to the fact that prominent opponents of the legitimate demands of the farmers were poll tax congressmen now attempting to filibuster against the anti-poll tax bill in the Senate. He pointed out that farmers had no way of influencing their representatives in Congress in the poll tax states because they didn't have the vote.

In Alabama, he said, before the introduction of the poll tax in 1902 the small hill farmers had a lot of political power. Since then, however, they have been powerless.

He appealed to the delegates to help the Southern farmers cast the poll tax burden off their backs.

PATTON IN FIGHT

The National Farmers Union has seen abolition of the poll tax as part of its program for several years, and its president, James G. Patton, is a member of the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax.

A note of opposition to Harris' plea was struck, however, by Yvon Ford, president of the newly-created Mid-Southern organization of the union. Ford, a former Mississippi state senator, dragged out the old States' rights argument, and attempted to defend Senators Bilbo and Doxey of Mississippi as friends of the small farmers.

Both President Patton in his report on Monday, the opening day of the convention, and W. M. Thatcher, national legislative chairman, in his report last night, mentioned the abolition of the poll tax as one of the goals of the union.

The legislative chairman also described, in his report, the secret meeting organized by Eric Johnson, President of the United States Chamber of Commerce, of certain reactionary leaders of large farm organizations to conspire against the President's anti-inflation program. The meeting was called by C. E. Babcock, President of the National Council of Farm Cooperatives, ostensibly to discuss legislation affecting the cooperatives. Instead, Thatcher said, it was a bitterly anti-labor, anti-Roosevelt session, led by Johnson and devoted to the task of embarrassing the President and hamstringing labor. Delegates from farm cooperatives had been brought there under false pretenses, he charged, yet the meeting was supposed to be proof of the fact that the farmers were in revolt against the President's program.

Thatcher reviewed legislative developments affecting the farmer during the past ten years, and dwelt at length with the principles of a farm and a peoples' program for prosperity and security after the war. He listed the following four points for reorganization of our war administration:

1. Dismissal of all dollar-a-year men.

2. Creation of an over-all war board composed of "proven public servants."

3. Greater representation of working farmers and industrial labor in advisory circles.

4. Consolidation of all war time governmental functions under an over-all board.

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(The Worker Staff Correspondent)

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BLURRED ISSUES

First, it has not clearly defined the relation of the Farmers Union to the great mass of farmers not in its ranks, including those in the Farm Bureau and the Grange. In its struggle for victory, the NFU, as the only national farm body supporting the nation's all-out war policies, has the job of rallying all the farmers of the nation in support of these policies. Despite these weaknesses, the convention has already indicated

4-1942
Daily World
Atlanta, Ga.

NEW JERSEY

Sharecropper Wins Extradition Stay

SEP 2 1942

New Jersey Refuses To Release Man For Farm Debt

ELIZABETH, New Jersey—(Calvin's News Service)—David Williams, 47-year-old sharecropper, won the first round in his battle against a South Carolina land owner who wants him put in a Southern jail for failing to farm a cotton crop after receiving several hundred dollars in advance. SEP 2 1942

With Harry Weltchek, volunteer attorney, contending that to force Williams to return involuntarily would be "reducing him to slavery", the Negro won a stay of extradition from Common Pleas Judge Hetfield. Williams, who says he and his wife and six children couldn't live on the $25 a month—5 months a year—and share of the profits they were paid will be given a chance to present his arguments for remaining in the North to a habeaus corpus hearing this week.

The Negro and his family had worked for about 12 years on the farm of Cleo Young at Florence, S C., but left in April. Williams worked in a cement factory in Linden until he was seized on the complaint filed by the farmer. The charge is a criminal one in South Carolina. Four attorneys volunteered their services to prevent his removal from New Jersey.

Efforts to extradite him, on a charge of breaking a verbal contract with a white Florence County (S.C.) plantation owner, were dropped last week following an agreement between Governor R. M. Jeffries of South Carolina and Governor Charles Edison of New Jersey. DEC 12 1942

Governor Edison, who signed an extradition order following the arrest of Williams in August, took the case up with the South Carolina chief executive on the strength of petitions and other protests in the victim's behalf. Governor Jeffries wrote last week to request return of the extradition warrant and other papers.

Williams, 47, and the father of seven children, worked for a Linden, N.J., cement block firm from April until the time of his arrest. He did not deny the agreement to work for Cleo Young, white planter, but said he could not support his family on the twenty-five dollars a month he received.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

Extradition Feud Ended

DEC 12 1942

ELIZABETH, N.J.—David Williams, former South Carolina sharecropper, will not be returned to the state of "peonage" from which he escaped last April.

Peoples Voice
New York, N. Y.

Better Living Conditions Urged For NJ Negro Transient Farmers

OCT 3 - 1942
OCT 3 - 1942
OCT 3 - 1942
OCT 3 - 1942

FREEHOLD, NJ (FP).—Declaring that NJ's Joads "exist, rather than live, in filthy hovels," a Monmouth County grand jury has demanded that their living conditions be improved. Members of the jury, together with state police and county prosecutors, recently made a personal inspection of the migratory workers' living quarters, and demanded that the county "do something." "Living conditions of migrants who come to Monmouth and elsewhere in NJ for farm work," Common Pleas Judge J. C. Giordano said, "disclose that such migrant workers existed, sometimes in groups, without any shelter, herded together without regard to age, sex, family relationship or disease, with the inhabitants of such premises entirely without supervision of any law or health authority, and without any regard to sanitary requirements.

"As a direct result of these conditions serious crimes have been committed. This grand jury has been informed, and it believes, that such workers are herded together onto trucks and boats from as far away from Monmouth county as the state of Florida and from the British West Indies without any more regard for their health or sanitation than is given to such workers when they arrive in this county, as above described."

The grand jury charges corroborated the findings of the Tolan committee, which held hearings in this area two years ago. Wealthy farm owners, who have been fighting proposed housing developments, maintain that the living conditions of their workers are satisfactory.

4-1942
Chicago Tribune
Chicago, Illinois

NEW YORK

RECRUIT HARLEM NEGROES, RELIEF TO AID FARMERS

OCT 28 1942

OCT 29 1942

[Copyright, 1942, By the New York Times.]

New York, Oct. 28.—To meet the acute farming situation in New York state caused by the farm labor shortage, Harlem Negroes with agricultural experience in the south, and New York City relief workers, both representing untapped sources of farm labor, were recruited for this year's harvest, it was revealed today as a committee to make a statewide study of New York's farm problems was appointed by Mrs. Anna M. Rosenberg, regional director of the war man power commission. Mrs. Rosenberg pointed out that from the two new sources of farm labor supply several hundred men were obtained for emergency harvest work. Recruiting extended as far south as Kentucky and North Carolina.

OCT 29 1942

4 - 1942
Daily World
Atlanta, Ga.

South Carolina

OSBORN DECISION BY SUPREME COURT SETS LEGAL PRECEDENT IN STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, S. C.—(SNS)—The State Supreme Court, in remanding the case of Sammie Osborn, under death sentence for shooting to death a farmer in Barnwell county, back to circuit court for retrial, set a legal precedent, Attorney W. H. Harley stated this week.

Mr. Harley wrote Thurgood Marshall, NAACP counsel, of the precedent and said:

"This is the first time that the rights of a guest was submitted to the court for decion, and we were sustained in our contention that, as against a trespasser, a guest is entitled to the same rights as the home owner. (Osborne shot the farmer, W. P. Walker, as the latter moved in on him with a stick and shotgun in the home of a friend.)

"The court held that a sharecropper, provided with a house on the property of the landlord, is entitled to all 'castle right.' This of course is correct, and I am glad that our court said so in unqualified language."

Mr. Harley, who was associated with Lawyer Frank P. Cave on the appeal of Osborn, also said: "You will note that the main opinion and the concurring opinion were written by circuit judges, who were sitting on the court because of illness of two of the justices. Judge Lide is the outstanding member of our bench, and I think that you will agree that his opinion indicates his knowledge of the law."

Lancaster, S. C. News
September 4, 1942

Shortage Of Farm Labor Is Serious

"There is grave danger that the farm labor situation may adversely affect agricultural production in South Carolina" declared J. Roy Jones, state agriculture commissioner, Wednesday.

"While the crops so far this year have been harvested practically at normal times a spell of bad weather will be serious to the cotton crop which is now being gathered" Mr. Jones continued, "and one of the principle causes of the apparent shortage is the difference in prices farmers are able to pay against higher wages being paid in industrial and public work centers.

"Some farms report acute shortages of labor. Comparatively few Negro farm laborers have been drafted into the army from the state but the ones who want to work are attracted to jobs where higher wages are paid.

"Even now farm wages have increased from 25 to 100 per cent varying in different sections of the state and also according to the character of work they have to do.

"Cotton and tobacco warehouse labor, closely associated with the farm, has increased 75 to 100 per cent and is said to be hard to get at these prices.

"More farm women and children have gone to work in the fields than usual and this accounts for good work farmers have done in war time production this year.

"Unless farmers can get prices for their products that will enable them to pay the better wages and compete with other lines the production program will undoubtedly be slowed down rather than increased," Mr. Jones concluded.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
November 10, 1942

Bean Crop Harvested

Success of the drive to secure labor for harvesting crops in the Charleston area was reported yesterday by W. McLeod Frampton, president of the Agricultural society of South Carolina, who said that practically all the bean crop has been harvested, thus ending the critical period.

Farmers now are awaiting a heavy rain to set out the spring cabbage crop, he said. This will require some labor, but will not make as heavy a demand as the bean harvest, he said.

Mr. Frampton gave much of the credit of success in obtaining sufficient labor to the negro ministers who mentioned the need from their pulpits.

Many of the negroes in these congregations have sons in the armed forces, and were impressed with the necessity of preventing the abandonment of farms so that the soldiers would have a source of livelihood to return to after the war, Mr. Frampton declared.

Charleston, S. C. News & Courier
October 31, 1942

NEGRO MINISTERS WILL AID HARVEST

Plan for Them to Supply Field Workers Approved at Conference Here

A plan for using the already-functioning countywide organization of negro ministers to encourage a movement of experienced rural workers back to the farms was endorsed yesterday at a meeting of negro and white representatives called by W. McLeod Frampton, president of the Agricultural Society of South Carolina.

It was agreed that the standing committee should be supplemented by teachers and other leaders in negro communities on all the nearby islands, where most of the county's largest truck farms are located.

The plan provides that each farm owner shall indicate to the minister, who will be the chairman of his particular community, the number of hands he will need at a certain time. The minister then, through his associates, will secure the number of volunteer workers the farmer needs.

Representative M. O. Gardner announced early in the meeting that the county superintendent of education had stated that if it became necessary to close the schools temporarily he would do so and provide for the addition of make-up days at the end of the term. H. H. McCarley, the superintendent, also revealed, Mr. Gardner said, that children doing farm work would be legitimately excused from school.

Recess Plan for Schools

It was pointed out that the plan of discontinuing school for a short time was more advisable than excusing a small portion of the students, who education would suffer when they fell behind in their work. By dismissing school and adding days on when students could make up the work, officials could keep all pupils on an equal basis, and the patriotic and energetic ones would not suffer.

John Deveaux, farm agent who works with the negroes of the county, pointed out that the idea of lengthening the school term must be carefully worked out, since farm hands will also be needed for harvesting in the spring.

The representatives at the meeting, almost without exception, had something to say, some view to express or some suggestion to made. Principal M. E. Fields, of the Society Corner school on James island, praised former experiments with adult education, saying that mass meetings held last year had greatly improved the community and had enabled persons in her community to do more for the war because of their studies.

"We don't get it any other way," she said.

Deveaux stated that there is a definite desire to help with the war effort. Already through group meetings followed by personal visits, deveaux has increased the food production.

"Everybody knows about the war," he declared, because everybody has a friend or loved one in the service now, and the people know "they can't stay there unless they're backed up . . . They've learned that they must do their same jobs a little better."

The women are in the fields now, Deveaux said, and when he goes to talk with them he must do it there.

Plea by Ledbetter

The Rev. C. S. Ledbetter stressed that beans are perishable, and the work of harvesting them must be done at once. He urged that through pressure and orgranization a solution to the problem be worked out before the government finds it necessary to interfere. He urged the release of students to gather crops.

"What does it matter to a child if he finishes the sixth grade if his country goes down on its knees?" he asked. "With organization we can get everybody working," he said, "but this responsibility must be laid at every man's door."

Representative Gardner pointed to the dark days ahead, urging preparation for meeting the problems of depression and preventing another wave of relief.

"There is no prosperity after war," he said, "and there never has been. If anybody tells you there will be, tell him figures don't lie."

"My people don't read," the Rev. William Brown said, "and so they can't know much because they can't believe anything they hear. We must set the example by having our own gardens and raising our own livestock, then we must teach them to produce food for themselves, their families, their livestock and those who can't produce."

C. W. Martin, of the department of commerce, read an article concerning Sunday labor, saying that he hoped working on Sunday would never be necessary in Charleston county.

Planning Group Use

As soon as the need for organization was expressed, leaders pointed to the agricultural planning committee already organized and functioning as the logical unit to carry on the work since they were already working exactly along the lines proposed.

C. W. Carraway, county agricultural agent who has been working at the root of the problem for some time, said he was sure the project enlarged yesterday would be successful because the people had never failed him.

"I know them, and I know they will measure up," Rev. Brown said

Julian B. Friday, urging the workers to forget their personal prejudices, said, "You are working for the army, for the boys across the sea".

For some types of harvesting, experience labor is required, he said, and high school students, although enthusiastic, could not do the work.

Those attending the meeting were Ciss Caroline Alston, Mr. Carraway, Mr. Frampton, Representative Gardner, W. C| Wilbur, vice president of the Agricultural society; Mr. Friday, Mr. Martin DeVeaux, Rev. Brown, Rev. Ledbetter, M. E. Fields, Samuel Faber, president of the nogro fair; Jerry Blake, secretary of the fair; Albertha J. Murray, principal of the Cutt Bridge school, and the Rev. Harold Roland, pastor of the Central Baptist church.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Tenant Farmers' Union Holds 8th Annual Meet

JAN 24 1942

SHEFFIELD, Ala. — The eighth annual convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers union closed here Saturday, Jan. 10, with the election of officers for the coming year.

J. R. Butler, for seven years head of the sharecropper organization, declined the nomination for re-election in 1942.

Roy E. Raley, or near Sheffield, was elected president, while Butler was given the post of honorary chairman of the executive council.

Re-elected for another term were F. R. Betton, vice-president of Cotton Plant, Ark., and H. L. Mitchell, secretary of Memphis, Tenn.

Members elected for the executive council were J. F. Hynds, white, Forrest City, Ark.; W. M. Tanner, white, Kennett, Mo; Roy Parks, white, Essex, Mo.; Wilbur White, white, Cruger, Miss.; L. C. McKay, Muscle Shoals, Ala.; Anderson Johnson, Hunter, Ark.; E. O. Cistrunk, Columbus, Miss., and J. E. Clayton, Litteg, Tex.

The 200 sharecropper delegates and visitors closed the Sheffield meeting with the re-enactment of the colorful ceremony of the land and returned to their homes in the states of Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, Mississippi and Alabama.

According to H. L. Mitchell the program for the coming year, as embodied in resolutions adopted by the convention, pledges every local to purchase one or more Defense Bonds and every member to save his dimes for defense stamps, and to cooperate fully with the war time agricultural program, planned by the Department of Agriculture.

Mitchell stated that while the STFU had a fraternal affiliation with the American Federation of Labor that the newly elected officers were instructed to explore the possibilities of affiliating with the National Farmer Union.

Mitchell also stated that the program of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union now called for the maintenance of the family type farm as a way of life and that the organization was going into the field of establishing purchasing, marketing, and producers' co-operatives.

Other parts of the 1942 program include a demand for the abolition of poll tax laws in the eight Southern states, discrimination against Negroes in war industries and a demand for representation on agencies dealing with agricultural problems in the emergency.

The convention also endorsed the Department of Agriculture's long term variable lease contract between landlords and tenants, and instructed the newly elected officers to press for action of the minimum wage law for farm labor, introduced in the first session of the seventy-seventh Congress.

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

Tenant Farmers Of Possible Labor Shortage Are Warned

JAN 9 - 1942

SHEFFIELD, ALA., Jan. 8.—(AP)—Delegates to the eighth annual convention of Southern Tenant Farmers Union (A. F. L.) were told today that "we must win the war against the enemy abroad but we must not lose our freedom at home."

Addressing some 200 delegates and visitors from five Southern states, Secretary H. L. Mitchell declared "it is just as important to the future welfare of America that an organization of little people on the land continues to grow in war as in peace."

He said "there is already a shortage of farm labor in many areas of the United States and as more men are called into the armed forces, and others find places in industrial production, there will be more calls for farm labor.

"We may expect young people and the older ones from the towns and cities to be drafted to aid in cultivating and harvesting crops."

Officers will be elected tomorrow and the convention closes Saturday. Delegates are from Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri and Mississippi.

A panel discussion of the wartime agricultural program, with participants stressing the need for building up morale among low-income farmers, was conducted this afternoon.

Among those speaking were several Federal farm agency officials, including J. Banks Young, of Washington, senior administrative officer of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

CHASE LEADER OUT OF TOWN UNDER THREAT

JAN 31 1942

Defense League Asks For Federal Probe Of Carruthersville

NEW YORK.—A violent attack on a meeting of sharecropper members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' union in Carruthersville, Mo., January 16, was this week reported by the Workers Defense League to the Civil Liberties Unit of the Department of Justice with a request for immediate federal investigation.

According to a report received by the defense league from the Memphis headquarters of the union, a meeting of about 60 farm laborers was in progress in a hall belonging to the International Union of Operating Engineers, A.F.L., when it was forcibly broken up by a mob.

W. M. Tanner, organizer and member of the general executive board of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, was forced to leave the town on threat of death if he returned.

The Workers Defense League wired Gov. F. C. Donnell of Missouri stating that the attack on the meeting at Carruthersville was reminiscent of past terrorism and violence against members of this sharecroppers union, and asking that a recurrence of such attacks upon the right of free speech and assembly be quelled by his immediate action.

Morris Milgram, national secretary, stated that names of members of the mob are already in the hands of the Department of Justice, and that he had been informed that the union would hold another meeting in Carruthersville in the same hall later in the month.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

Planters Assault 'Cropper

FEB 13 1942

Violence Used At Meeting of Missouri Union

CARUTHERSVILLE, Mo. —(ANP)—For the second time in as many weeks, mob violence was used by Missouri planters against a meeting of the union of sharecroppers—this time in the form of a public beating and attempt to kill Scotty Spears, member of Southern Tenant Farmers' union, following a meeting held under police protection in an AFL union hall here last Friday.

Spears, wearing an STFU convention badge, left the union hall in company with an officer who agreed to walk in back of him and protect him from any assault. Just as Spears reached the bottom of the stairs, someone hit him on the head with a pistol.

He was then beaten on the side of the head, in the eye and other parts of the body. As he ran, two shots were fired at him. He did not see the officer again after he was struck.

Some 100 planters and 400 sharecroppers and farm laborers attended the meeting, held at the request of the union under the protection of the sheriff of Pemiscot county, one of his deputies and several city policemen. A meeting held the week before in the same hall was broken up and W. M. Tanner, organizer and member of the general executive board of the union, was escorted out of town and threatened with death if he returned.

Tanner was present at the second meeting, where he addressed the body and announced the program of the organization. However, while he spoke, planters were constantly heckling him, with the permission of officers. After the meeting he was escorted to another town by officers.

Frank McCallister, Workers Defense league southern secretary efforts of the making a personal investigation to force the arrest and conviction of guilty parties if local officials fai

to take a and telegra of Missouri and the U. S. Department of Justice. Sec. H. L. Mitchell announced that organizing efforts of the union in Missouri would continue despite the attacks.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Tenant Farmers' Union Holds 8th Annual Meet

JAN 24 1942

SHEFFIELD, Ala. — The eighth annual convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers union closed here Saturday, Jan. 10, with the election of officers for the coming year.

J. R. Butler, for seven years head of the sharecropper organization, declined the nomination for re-election in 1942.

Roy E. Raley, or near Sheffield, was elected president, while Butler was given the post of honorary chairman of the executive council.

Re-elected for another term were F. R. Betton, vice-president of Cotton Plant, Ark., and H. L. Mitchell, secretary of Memphis, Tenn.

Members elected for the executive council were J. F. Hynds, white, Forrest City, Ark.; W. M. Tanner, white, Kennett, Mo.; Roy Parks, white, Essex, Mo.; Wilbur White, white, Cruger, Miss.; L. C. McKay, Muscle Shoals, Ala.; Anderson Johnson, Hunter, Ark.; E. O. Cistrunk, Columbus, Miss., and J. E. Clayton, Litteg, Tex.

The 200 sharecropper delegates and visitors closed the Sheffield meeting with the re-enactment of the colorful ceremony of the land and returned to their homes in the states of Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, Mississippi and Alabama.

According to H. L. Mitchell the program for the coming year, as embodied in resolutions adopted by the convention, pledges every local to purchase one or more Defense Bonds and every member to save his dimes for defense stamps, and to cooperate fully with the war time agricultural program, planned by the Department of Agriculture.

Mitchell stated that while the STFU had a fraternal affiliation with the American Federation of Labor that the newly elected officers were instructed to explore the possibilities of affiliating with the National Farmer Union.

Mitchell also stated that the program of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union now called for the maintenance of the family type farm as a way of life and that the organization was going into the field of establishing purchasing, marketing, and producers' co-operatives.

Other parts of the 1942 program include a demand for the abolition of poll tax laws in the eight Southern states, discrimination against Negroes in war industries and a demand for representation on agencies dealing with agricultural problems in the emergency.

The convention also endorsed the Department of Agriculture's long term variable lease contract between landlords and tenants, and instructed the newly elected officers to press for action of the minimum wage law for farm labor, introduced in the first session of the seventy-seventh Congress.

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

Tenant Farmers Of Possible Labor Shortage Are Warned

JAN 9 - 1942

SHEFFIELD, ALA., Jan. 8.—(AP)—Delegates to the eighth annual convention of Southern Tenant Farmers Union (A. F. L.) were told today that "we must win the war against the enemy abroad but we must not lose our freedom at home."

Addressing some 200 delegates and visitors from five Southern states, Secretary H. L. Mitchell declared "it is just as important to the future welfare of America that an organization of little people on the land continues to grow in war as in peace."

He said "there is already a shortage of farm labor in many areas of the United States and as more men are called into the armed forces, and others find places in industrial production, there will be more calls for farm labor.

"We may expect young people and the older ones from the towns and cities to be drafted to aid in cultivating and harvesting crops."

Officers will be elected tomorrow and the convention closes Saturday. Delegates are from Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri and Mississippi.

A panel discussion of the wartime agricultural program, with participants stressing the need for building up morale among low-income farmers, was conducted this afternoon.

Among those speaking were several Federal farm agency officials, including J. Banks Young, of Washington, senior administrative officer of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

CHASE LEADER OUT OF TOWN UNDER THREAT

JAN 31 1942

Defense League Asks For Federal Probe Of Carruthersville

NEW YORK.—A violent attack on a meeting of sharecropper members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' union in Carruthersville, Mo., January 16, was this week reported by the Workers Defense League to the Civil Liberties Unit of the Department of Justice with a request for immediate federal investigation.

According to a report received by the defense league from the Memphis headquarters of the union, a meeting of about 60 farm laborers was in progress in a hall belonging to the International Union of Operating Engineers, A.F.L., when it was forcibly broken up by a mob.

W. M. Tanner, organizer and member of the general executive board of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, was forced to leave the town on threat of death if he returned.

The Workers Defense League wired Gov. F. C. Donnell of Missouri stating that the attack on the meeting at Carruthersville was reminiscent of past terrorism and violence against members of this sharecroppers union, and asking that a recurrence of such attacks upon the right of free speech and assembly be quelled by his immediate action.

Morris Milgram, national secretary, stated that names of members of the mob are already in the hands of the Department of Justice, and that he had been informed that the union would hold another meeting in Carruthersville in the same hall later in the month.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

Planters Assault 'Cropper

FEB 13 1942

Violence Used At Meeting of Missouri Union

CARUTHERSVILLE, Mo. —(ANP)—For the second time in as many weeks, mob violence was used by Missouri planters against a meeting of the union of sharecroppers—this time in the form of a public beating and attempt to kill Scotty Spears, member of Southern Tenant Farmers' union, following a meeting held under police protection in an AFL union hall here last Friday.

FEB 13 1942

Spears, wearing an STFU convention badge, left the union hall in company with an officer who agreed to walk in back of him and protect him from any assault. Just as Spears reached the bottom of the stairs, someone hit him on the head with a pistol.

He was then beaten on the side of the head, in the eye and other parts of the body. As he ran, two shots were fired at him. He did not see the officer again after he was struck.

Some 100 planters and 400 sharecroppers and farm laborers attended the meeting, held at the request of the union under the protection of the sheriff of Pemiscot county, one of his deputies and several city policemen. A meeting held the week before in the same hall was broken up and W. M. Tanner, organizer and member of the general executive board of the union, was escorted out of town and threatened with death if he returned.

Frank McCallister, Workers Defense League southern secretary efforts of Mitchell and Tanner was present at the second meeting, where he addressed the body and announced the program of the organization. However, while he spoke, planters were constantly heckling him, with the permission of officers. After the meeting he was escorted to another town by officers.

FEB 13 1942

to take action, dispatched letters and telegrams of protest to the governor of Missouri and the U. S. Department of Justice. Sec. H. L. Mitchell announced that organizing of the union in Missouri would continue despite the attacks.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Offer Reward For Molesters Of Tenant Farmer Union Organizers

FEB 21 1942

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — H. L. Mitchell, general secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, announced this week that the American Civil Liberties Union of New York City had posted a $500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person or persons interfering with the legal right of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union to hold meetings and proceed about its business of extending organization among tenant farmers, sharecroppers and farm laborers in Southeast Missouri.

The $500 reward was offered following the breaking up of a meeting of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in Caruthersville on January 16 and the beating up of Scottie Spears, a Negro member of the S.T.F.U., who attended the second meeting at Caruthersville on January 23.

Mitchell also announced that Claude F. Cooper, an attorney of Blytheville, Ark., had been employed by the Southern Tenant Farmers Union to prosecute the case.

He said that Cooper had been instructed to have warrants issued for the arrest of a number of prominent plantation owners and ginners who had been identified as leaders of the mob breaking up the meeting and later beating up Spears.

Mitchell, who conferred with officials of the Department of Justice in Washington a week ago, also stated that the department had the case under consideration and that he expected them to take action in the event the law was not promptly enforced by local authorities in Missouri.

Chicago Defender
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THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION, a corporation organized under the laws of New York, hereby offers a reward of FIVE HUNDRED ($500) DOLLARS to the first person supplying information leading to the arrest, conviction and imprisonment for thirty days or more of any person or persons who took part in mob attacks at Caruthersville, Missouri, on the evenings of Jan. 16 and 23, 1942, resulting in violence upon the person of anyone attending the meetings of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union held in a hall belonging to the International Union of Operating Engineers A. F. of L.

Information or inquiries should be addressed to

CLAUDE F. COOPER, *Attorney-at-Law*
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All information will be kept confidential.

FEB 21 1942

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

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Tanner was present at the second meeting, where he addressed the body and announced the program of the organization. However, while he spoke, planters were constantly heckling him, with the permission of officers. After the meeting he was escorted to another town by officers.

FEB 21 1942

EFFORTS TO CONTINUE

Frank McCallister, Workers Defense league southern secretary, making a personal investigation to force the arrest and conviction of guilty parties if local officials fail to take action, dispatched letters and telegrams of protest to the governor of Missouri and the U. S. Department of Justice. Secretary H. L. Mitchell announced that organizing efforts of the union in Missouri would continue despite the attacks.

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.

Threat to Union Member

FEB 27 1942

Warning Says If He Talks He Will Be a 'Dead Negro'

CARUTHERSVILLE, Mo. —Peace officers of Caruthersville, scene of recent attacks upon members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, warned Frank McCallister, southern secretary of the Workers Defense league, that if Scottie Spears, injured Negro union member, testified against his assailants, he would leave Caruthersville "a dead nigger."

An investigation just completed by McCallister revealed that prominent local planters and a former city alderman were involved in the attacks.

The first meeting held here Jan. 16 in the hall of the Operating Engineers (AFL) was broken up by planters, and the STFU organizer, W. M. Tanner, was escorted from the meeting after beng threatened with death if he returned.

BEATEN BY MOB

FEB 27 1942

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Claude F. Cooper, Blytheville, Ark., attorney, and Mr. McCallister conferred here on Feb. 11 with Robert Hawkins, local prosecuting attorney and peace officer. They were advised that the prosecutor would entertain any charges filed, but that he could not guarantee safety of witnesses in any trial held here and he predicted that any effort to hold a trial would result in a mob of planters breaking it up and attacking the witnesses, prosecutor, union attorney, had no respect at all for local or state authorities, and that if the Governor came down there he in Pemiscot county without the couldn't hold a peaceful trial in lives of the witnesses for the state these cases, and being in jeopardy.

ORDERED TO LEAVE

Cooper and McCallister were both warned by County Prosecutor Hawkins that their own lives were in jeopardy if they persisted in pressing these charges. Hawkins also said that the planters had no respect at all for local or state authorities, and that if the federal government. Gov. Forrest C. Donnell of Missouri is being asked to make an immediate investigation to find why it is impossible to hold a trial

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SFTU ASKS PROBE OF FARM BUREAU IN DIXIE STATES

Pittsburgh Courier

MEMPHIS, Tenn., May 14—The Southern Tenant Farmeys' Union last week made public a report entitled, "The American Farm Bureau in the South."

Accompanied by a brief of affidavits secured from approximately 100 farmers in the states of Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi, the report has been sent to Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture, and to Senator Robert M. LaFallette with a request for an official investigation of the activities of the Farm Bureau, which in 1941, reported a paid membership of 168,474 in the eleven southern States.

The report charges the following:

1. That the American Farm Bureau leadership is closely allied with the employer groups who have been sponsoring a "grass roots" campaign to discredit organized labor.

2. That the American Farm Bureau constitutes the most powerful farm lobby in Washingotn and that it is responsible for Congress drastically curtailing the work of the Farm Security Administration.

VICTIMS OF RACKET.

3. That over 75 per cent of the members of the Farm Bureau in the states of Alabama, Arnansas, and Mississippi are small farmers, tenants, sharecroppers and farm laborers and that official investigation would uncover thousands of cases identical with the ones uncovered in the survey made by the Union and that such an investigation would demonstrate that these farm people, Negro and white alike, are victims of a vicious racket.

4. That it is the practice of AAA officials in Alabama counties to delivery government checks to farmers and that these officials are accompanied by agents of the Farm Bureau with sufficient money to cash all checks and deduct membership dues.

5. That the methods of checking off Farm Bureau membership fees vary from State to Statee and that in Arkansas plantation owners charge the $2.50 per year to the accounts of tenants and sharecroppers or from the wages of day laborers. That members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union who refuse membership in the Farm Bureau are dispossessed from the land.

6. That in Mississippi both methods of checking off Farm Bureau payments are used. That one-half of the Farm Bureau membership in this tSate is located in the six Delta Countie where the population if from 73 to 91 per cent Negro, and that three-fourths of the members are colored sharecroppers or day laborers whose dues have been checked off by their plantation owners.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

STFU SETS UP LEGAL OFFICE FOR SHARECROPPERS, TENANTS

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—(SNS)—

H. L. Mitchell, general secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, announced that the sharecropper organization has established a Legal Department to provide legal advice and to handle complaints of tenants, sharecroppers, and farm laborers in the States of Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma where the STFU has organization.

This legal service, Mr. Mitchell asserted, was made possible through a grant to the Southern Tenant Farmers Union by the Robert Marshall Civil Liberties Trust Fund of New York City. Attorney, K. T. Sutton, of Helena, Ark., had been employed as chief counsel.

Complaints made by tenants, sharecroppers and farm laborers for settlement of crop accounts and claims for AAA payments will be handled as well as cases involving civil rights.

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly by agents of the Union and referred to Mr. Sutton. If a complaint is made against a landowner by a tenant, sharecropper or farm laborer, the landowner will be notified in writing by the attorney and given an opportunity to make a settlement before legal action is taken.

It is believed that large part of the work of this legal department will be in adjusting claims of tenants and sharecroppers under the Agricultural Administration and other federal agencies.

Mr. Sutton who has been practicing law in Helena since 1927 has devoted much of his time during the past eight years to representing tenants and sharecroppers in Eastern Arkansas. In 1937 he represented 25 Negro and white clients who had been convicted of petty crimes and sentenced to serve time on private plantations in St. Francis County, Arkansas. Disclosures made in these cases led to the repeal of the law by the Arkansas State Legislature which permitted the lease of convicts to private plantation owners. Mr. Sutton was born and reared in the Ozark Mountains near Jasper, Arkansas and is a graduate of the University of Arkansas Law School.

Cotton Pickers Are Urged To Demand Union Wage Rates

The Informer
Houston, Tex.

Memphis.—Thousand of handbills calling upon cotton pickers to demand $2.00 per hundred (30c per hour) for picking cotton are being circulated throughout rural communities in the mid-South, it is announced by the Southen Tenant Farmers Union.

OCT 3 - 1942

Cotton pickers are urged by the union to refuse to pick for less than this wage rate, which is the equivalent of that set by the United States government in its agreement with the Republic of Mxico for wages to be guaranteed to Mexican farm labor brought into this country.

The union's action in distributing the handbills was authorzed by a wage committee elected by the Cotton Pickers Conference held in Memphis on Labor Day, according ti H. L. Mitchell, general secretary of the union. At the conference, which was attended by 300 delegates from Arkansas, Missouri, Alabama, Missmissippi, Tennessee, and Texas, a survey revealed that cotton pickers in each of these states are receiving far below this government wage. The conference was addressed by representatives of th U. S. Department of Agriculture, the War Manpower Commission, the U. S. Department of Labor, and the U. S. Employment Service.

OCT 3 - 1942

The Southern Tenant Farmers Union has called upon the Workers Defense league and its supporters to stand by in case their help is needed in disputes arising as a result of the demand for a 30c per hour minimum wage.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

Cotton Worker Pay Hike Asked By Tenant Union

SEP 12 1942

MEMPHIS. — (ANP)—A conference of cotton pickers was held here Labor day to petition the government to set a minimum wage for picking the 1942 crop, it was declared by H. L. Mitchell, general secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers' union.

Petitions signed by 8,000 pickers, seeking establishment of employment standards on cotton plantations to enable farm labor families to earn enough to purchase necessities of life and maintain general health, were presented at the conference. The petitioners live in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Texas and Tennessee.

Maximum wages of $1.50 a day are paid on cotton plantations during spring and summer months, Mitchell said, with the average about $1.00 a day.

SEP 12 1942

To allay the labor shortage, an agreement has been reached between Mexico and the federal government to provide a minimum of 30 cents an hour for a 10 hour day for imported Mexican pickers, Mitchell said.

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Tenant Farmers Hit Importation Of Mexican Labor

OCT 10 1942

OCT 10 1942

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Oct. 8—Opposing importation into this country of Mexican labor to work on American farms, General Secretary H. L. Mitchell, of the Southern Tenant Farmers' union here. told the War Manpower commission that 1,600 farm laborers be furnished in ten days or two weeks by his organization if arrangements were made for their employment in other States.

NO SHORTAGE OF FARM LABOR

Mr. Mitchell's authority for protest to Commissioner McNutt followed instructions from the executive committee of the Southern Tenant Farmers' union, which had a special session concerning importation of the Mexican workers when plenty of American farm laborers were employed and available.

Mr. Mitchell, speaking from firsthand knowledge based upon a survey conducted by his union, contended that there was no actual shortage of labor in the Mid-South as may be attested by the fact that the existent wages for farm work are the lowest in the United States. If workers were in great demand, he pointed out, the wages, as a matter of pure economics, would be higher.

Dresden, Tenn., Enterprise
October 16, 1942

CAN'T CRITICISE DRESDEN NEGROES

From some sections come reports of negroes refusing to go to the cotton fields and assist in gathering in the fleecy staple.

A week or so ago, a criticism appeared in this paper from Greenfield of negroes in that locality because they did not help pick cotton when asked to do so.

This can't be said of our Dresden negroes. Daily we observe great crowds of women and children going to and from nearby cotton fields. In the late afternoon they are observed dragging themselves back toward home, evidence of their hard day's work. Some are fortunate enough to get transportation, but with the tire rationing situation all cannot be transported to and from the cotton patches. This has made no difference, for they go anyhow. We have frequently had occasion to say through these columns that Dresden's colored population is the best in the state. They are thrifty, most of them owning their homes; they are energetic, polite and generally exceptionally law-abiding.

Smuggles Woman Out By Dark

HOUSTON.—Smuggled out under the cover of darkness, Mrs. Addie Wheatfall, 43, 5711 Polk, was able to escape from the D. Merret farm seven miles southwest of Navasota Monday night after Merett and his foreman, Don Kirk, severly clubbed her over the head and fractured her left arm, according to Mrs. Wheatfall and J. D. Robinson, 3119 Bell, who smuggled her out.

Merett ,a large plantation owner, clubbed Mrs. Wheatfall in his house Monday, July 20, about noon, when he questioned her about the departure from the farm of Willie Young, her son.

Mrs. Wheatfall's Story

Mrs. Wheatfall said: "I was getting ready to go to the field when he (Merett) sent for me Monday and ask me about my son. I told him that he had gone to visit his grandmother. He told me if I didn't get him back right away he would kill me. He then told me I was talking too slow and grabbed me and started choking me. Before I knew anything he was clubbing me over the head with his walking stick that he carries around with him to whip his help on the place. He beat me and then had his overseer and rider, Don Kirk, to hit me several times. After he quit whipping me he got some soot and sugar to put on my head to stop it from bleeding. When I left his house to start to the field he told me to go home and get some rest. He then sent the cook down and told her to tell me that he was sorry and that he wasn't going to beat me any more."

The Rescue

J. D. Robinson who went to her rescue said: "You see I used to work on Mr. Merett's plantation. I left there Friday night, July 17, and came to Houston. When I heard that he had beaten up Mrs. Wheatfall, I went back Monday to slip her out. After dark I brought her out and brought her to Houston. I knew I didn't have a chance if I tried to bring her out during the day. That's why I waited until dark. I had to slip away the same way."

According to Robinson's story the trouble started when Mrs. Wheatfalls son, Willie Young, left the farm last Saturday. Young, who had been held in jail for the murder of Keel in Hempstead last November 4, was bailed out of jail by S. D. Merett and was carried to his farm to work and make enough money to pay his lawyer's fees. Young started working March 20, for $1.25 per day. However, several weeks ago the pay was raised to $1.50. Mrs. Wheatfall went to the farm to help her son pay the lawyer's fee by serving as his cook and working for $1.00 per day. Young left after the lawyer S. D. Merett had hired, joined the army.

Young's Story

Young said: "After Mr. Billy Stanford left for the army I knew I had to have another lawyer. The lawyer's fee was $50.00 and Mr. Merett claims he had paid the lawyer's fee and charged $5.00 interest on it. When Mr. Stanford left he told me that I owed him $34.00 and I had paid him more than $75.00 on it since March. He took everything I made for the first six weeks and took my mother's pay for the groceries. After the first six weeks I had to pay him around two or three dollars every week. Our grocery bill was never more than what we would make but he had a "grocery week" and that was the week when all went for groceries. Grocery week was every two weeks and I will show you the grocery bills for those week periods. He got mad with me when I told him I didn't think I should be made to pay another lawyer's fee since I had paid for one. With this lawyer gone to the army, it seems like the money that I had already put in lawyer's fees would go to pay the next lawyer for taking the case. This made him mad and when I saw that all he wanted to do was make me pay for another lawyer, I left and came to Houston to hire a lawyer for my self. That is why he beat my mother up. My trial is coming up in September and I have been working ever since March to pay my lawyer and he has taken the money and I don't have a lawyer."

A Story Of Deprivation And Starvation

The grocery bills showed to Informer reporters revealed a story of deprivation and starvation. Despite the fact that exhorbitant prices were charged at the farm commissary, Mrs. Wheatfall and her family, which included four persons spent only $24.70 for groceries in 13 weeks an average of $1.90 per week in the family. The grocery bill revealed that 20c per pound was paid for hog jowl, kerosene 15c per gallon, sugar 10c per pound and syrup 90c per gallon. The only groceries bought were flour, lard, meal, sour belly and syrup and seasoning material.

A Story Of Peonage

Robinson who lived with the family said, "It was hard alright and I was sure glad to get away. We started work around 5 o'clock in the morning and worked until about 8 o'clock that night. We ddin't have but one hour at noon no matter how hot it was or how far we were from a place to eat. And they worked you like slaves too. They had an overseer, we call him a rider to see to it that you work. He rdies a horse. The houses out there are bad and hardly fit to live in. I had to sleep on the floor. I asked Merett last Friday for some money to buy me some pants and he told me that pay day was tomorrow and to wait. He said it made the books hard to keep. So I left and went to town. He got in his car and caught me and tried to get me to go back to the farm. But I told him I was going to hang around a while and see what it could get. This made him mad and he shook his stick at me and told me that this was what I needed and said he was going to give it to me. I thought then that it was time for me to get out of town, and so I left.

Robinson also revealed that he had a large number of whites working for him and boasted that he treated all Negroes and whites alike."

"He does that" said Robinson, "only difference is that he doesn't whip the whites with his stick. But he makes them work as hard and pays them the same thing that he pays the Negroes."

Young, a bridegroom of a few weeks, had to leave his wife on the plantation but hopes to get her away somehow soon.

Mrs. Wheatfall received reporters in her room where she is still in bed from the assault. Her head was bandaged. She received treatments from Dr. F. H. LeGall in the Pilgrim Building. Dr. LeGall stated that there was a deep wound about three inches long in the top of her skull and another one about one and one-half nich long back of her skull and that both were deep penetrating of the walls of her skull. Other gaping lacerated were treated and he had to take stitches on all of the wounds.

Her face was badly bruised. She was a bit nervous and was still afraid of what might happen. She also had one eye badly blackened by the blows of the white landowner. She further stated that she did not report the affair to the sheriff because she knew it would not do any good.

4-1942
Chicago Bee
Chicago, Illinois

The Ghost Of Waller

ODELL WALLER is dead. He was electrocuted by the state of Virginia last week for having killed his white landlord who refused to allot him his share of the crops and threatened to kill him for asking for it.

The two-year fight to save the life of the sharecropper made Waller a symbol. His name was to be linked to the anti-poll tax movement in the same manner that John Brown's was connected with the abolitionist movement.

During the two-year fight to save the life of Waller it is interesting to note that the stress was not on his innocence but rather on the most basic and elemental rights that a democracy can offer its citizens—the right to a free and impartial trial. It was argued before every court that would lend an ear that Waller was denied the right of a fair trial as our democracy has defined it. This request seemed small enough. It was argued that the jury which convicted him was made up of planters and merchants who sat as adjuncts to the executioner by virtue of the fact that the Virginia laws prevent any person from serving as a juror unless his poll tax is paid. A jury made up of such a group would have about as much sympathy for a sharecropper when he is accused of killing his landlord as a Wisconsin pheasant would have for a sea-going whale. None but those who were lacking in reason could assume otherwise. Under the economic system which obtains in Virginia and the other seven poll tax states paying the poll tax is like going on a voluntary, foodless, ration strike for a week insofar as the sharecropper is concerned. It just isn't done and the laws were made to secure that end.

Waller's case revealed to America how our political society has grown cancerous by the evil of the poll tax system and is being polluted by congressmen from the eight states who have held office longer in proportion than any other group of congressmen. The case revealed how the little man is ignored in the South so far as political recognition and economic equality are concerned. It revealed how with the seniority of the congressmen from the poll tax states the Washington scene is dominated by southerners who are reactionary and callous to the rights of the majority of the people of this nation.

May the ghost of Waller come back to walk the silent halls of southern legislatures until those who sit in their secret chambers realize the imperative necessity of the abolition of the poll tax laws. May his ghost haunt those public officials who have stood in defiance of the organic laws of this land and to the end that justice has been denied to Negroes and poor whites.

May the spirit of Waller electrify those millions who have so gallantly fought for simple justice and continue their campaign until the iniquitous South which gives to the nation the rancous Rankin, the reactionary Dies, the haughty Cotton "Ed" Smith and scores of other liberty-hating officials will become a part of the Union, in fact, in spirit, and in deed.

If this be done Waller will not have died in vain.

4-1942
Daily World
Atlanta. Georgia

Leaders Confer With Roosevelt On Proposition

Sharecropper Is Scheduled To Die This Morning

WASHINGTON—(SNS)— President Roosevelt Wednesday was urged to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the case of Odell Waller, Virginia sharecropper, who is scheduled to die this morning at 8 o'clock in the state penitentiary of Virginia.

Virginia's Governor Darden has refused to extend executive clemency on behalf of the Pittsylvania county sharecropper, convicted of murder of his white farmer landlord, Oscar Davis, and the only hope of preventing the execution this morning now lies in a Presidential Commission of Inquiry.

A full page advertisement of petition to President Roosevelt appeared Wednesday morning in the Washington Star.

Here Wednesday to confer with the President on the matter of a Commission of Inquiry were A Philip Randolph, Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, Walter White, Frank Crosswaith, Layle Lane, Channing Tobias, Anne Hedgman and the Rev. Imes.

TELEGRAMS FLOOD OFFICE

In the meantime, the President's office was flooded with telegrams from interested citizens from all sections of the country who urged the Chief Executive to appoint a Presidential Commission of Inquiry for the purpose of investigating Waller's case.

It was learned in Richmond, Virginia, Wednesday, that it has been necessary to impose Waller's cell with screen wire. State penitentiary officials said Waller became violent as the date for his execution neared.

Major Youell and other penitentiary officials were reported to have said Waller is "either crazy or acting crazy." He was reported by officials as taking off his clothes, throwing objects and refuse at guards, and in general acting violently.

LAY IN DEATH ROW

Waller has spent 625 days in death row since being confined there on October 9, 1940. Governor Darden recently stayed Waller's execution from June 19 to July 2 marking the fifth reprieve from two Virginia governors.

Four supreme court justices denied Saturday at separate times a stay of execution for Waller, according to John F. Finerty, attorney for the condemned man. He was turned down in succession by Chief Justice Stone and Justice Black, Jackson and Frankfurter. They were the only members of the supreme court in Washington. Any member of the court has the power to issue a stay.

The attorney said he sought a stay of execution to permit a new appeal to the supreme court, now in recess until October, on the question of whether the man was denied his constitutional rights because non-payers of poll taxes were barred from the juries which indicted and tried him.

GOVERNOR SENT PETITION

Meanwhile in Richmond, 19 Virginians, leaders in religion, education, labor and other phases of life in the state sent to the governor a petition for clemency for Waller.

Declaring their belief that Waller should not be executed, the petitioners cited five factors which they said should be taken into consideration. Those included:

"There is a widespread conviction that the extreme penalty imposed should not be carried out.

"Careful students of the record of Waller's trial report that it is impossible for anyone to determine intelligently that the condemned man was guilty of murder in the first degree.

"We are informed by those in whom we have confidence that important facts were not brought out at the trial.

"An act of mercy by your excellency at this time would allay public concern."

The signers of the petition included John Stewart Bryan, president of the College of William and Mary; David G. George, labor relations assistant for the WPB in Virginia; Virginius Dabney, editor of the gogue; Ernest R. Pugh regional director CIO; the Rt Rev. H. St. George Tucker, bishop of diocese of Virginia and presiding bishop of the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States and Dr. John M. Ellison, president of Virginia Union University

General Manager Scott Wires F. D. R.

C. A. Scott, general manager of the Atlanta Daily World and Scott Newspaper Syndicate, Wednesday was one of many Americans to wire President Roosevelt urging appointment of a Presidental Commission on Inquiry to investigate the case of Odell Waller, Virginia sharecropper who is scheduled to be executed this morning for the murder of his white farmer landlord. Mr. Scott's telegram follows:

"Followed closely Odell Waller case. Following astounding news that Governor Darden (Virginia) has refused commutation we urge immediate appointment of commission to further investigate the system responsible for Waller's act. His execution tomorrow would be a defeat of democratic principles."

4-1942
Peoples Voice
New York, N. Y.

Storm of Protest Over Death of Sharecropper

SPECIAL

PV's poll of reaction to Odell Waller's death reveale unanimity of opinion, as most speakers, editorial writer and organizations emphasized the need for abolishment o poll taxes, jimcro and sharecropping. Comment range from the staid **NY Times** statement that Virginians woul have to work to abolish "poll taxes and a system of land usage tha dissipates the national heritage" to the Catholic **Commonweal's** i memoriam editorial which found no excuse for the Supreme Cou judges "who insisted upon a technical point of order in order to avoid having to adjucate a politically delicate issue." The following excerpts reveal that left wing, right wing, liberals, labor and middle-of-the-roaders joined hands in their reactions:

- *International Labor Defense:* "The deep sorrow and shame felt by all friends of justice and the Negro people over the death of Odell Waller is mixed with the deepest indignation and protest against the exponents of Southern lynch law who were responsible for it." . . . His death "will serve to strengthen the determination of the ILD to redouble their energies in the fight against discrimination, jimcrow, poll tax, and lynching and for the full and unequivocal establishment of the rights of the Negro people."
- *Daily Worker:* "When Gov. Darden, at the last moment, rushed Waller to the chair, it was in rank defiance of progressive sentiment from all sections of the population and of the country, including the South. Waller was 'legally' lynched at a time when protests were mounting throughout the nation, and in order to stifle efforts to get him a fair hearing."
- *James W. Ford:* "This morning, a tragic and shameful act was committed against the Negro people. Odell Waller, guilty of no crime, was executed in the State of Virginia. Not only the Negro people mourn and have cause for indignation because of this crime, but all progressive people, anti-fascists and win-the-war forces hang their heads in shame. This crime is a disgrace to America and of service only to hitler."
- *National Negro Congress* "The execution of Odell Waller was a blow to the whole cause of Negro rights, our war effort and to national unity to defeat hitler. This outrageous crime shows the need for wiping out all of the hideous injustices against Negroes out of which Waller cases grow. . . . The NNC calls upon its councils and friends to hold immediately, win-the-war rallies to protest against the outrageous injustice of which Odell Waller was a victim."
- *National Maritime Union:* "We cannot bring back this man to life, but we can and must have a precedent for the future, so that when the American people speak, we will be heard."

At a special meeting of the NMU the following resolution was passed: "That this meeting go on record in condemnation of this brutal miscarriage of justice, and that we request that President Roosevelt use his power to make the anti-lynching bill a law without delay. Also that the anti-poll tax bill be brought out immediately."

- *Harlem Workers Club:* has issued a broadside for "Odell Waller memorial meeting. Born 1916. Legally lynched 1942." The meeting to be held Friday, July 10, will have George Breitman, editor of the *Militant*, as principal speaker.
- *Commonweal:* "Being a poor Negro, Waller paid no poll tax. But when he came up for trial, the jury which decided his case was selected exclusively from the ranks of those who could pay and had paid poll taxes. That, we insist, disqualified his jury, for it is not a jury of his peers.

"It is somehow indisputable that a voter should be forced to pay money for the privilege of voting. There is something dirty about a qualification of cash. . . . But what we must see the end of, if we are to be true to our tradition, is the extension of this system to the selection of jurymen. It is utterly corrupting to think that men should pay to be allowed to sit in judgment of the poor."

Afro-American
Baltimore, Md

Waller Still in Death Row After Fifth Reprieve

RICHMOND.

Odell Waller, 25 - year - old sharecropper convicted of the slaying of his white landlord and sentenced to die in the electric chair, began his 587th day in death row at the State Penitentiary on Friday after Governor Colgate W. Darden, Jr., had granted him a 13-day reprieve.

The reprieve was granted seventeen hours before Waller was to have been executed and was the fifth he has received since his conviction in 1940. A hearing on a petition for commutation of his sentence has been set for June 29.

18,000 Urge Clemency

While sentiment for executive clemency continued to grow in the State, 18,000 persons assembled at a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden, New York, last week voted unanimously in favor of a petition for the commutation of Waller's sentence. More than 1,000 letters, telegrams and circulars poured into the governor's office each day prior to his signing the reprieve.

Waller's attorney, John F. Finerty of New York, and Edmund M. Preston of Richmond, representatives of the Workers' Defense League, have contended that Waller did not have equal protection of the law because he was tried by a jury of poll tax payers, whereas he never paid such taxes.

None of the appellate courts has agreed with this contention. The Supreme Court also refused to review the case. Waller's execution was stayed to July 2.

Judge's View

Judge J. T. Clement, who presided at the first trial of Waller, answering the charge that "no man of Waller's economic status sat on the jury because they were excluded on account of the payment of their poll taxes," said in a letter to the N.Y. Times Friday:

"There is no such law and no such practice in Virginia of which I am aware. The jury commissioners are required to select good substantial and intelligent citizens for jury service, and this type of citizen usually pays his poll taxes as well as other debts."

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

Memorandum on The Waller Case

THE SHOOTING AND THE TRIAL

Odell Waller, Negro sharecropper, who on July 15, 1940 shot his white former landlord in a dispute over crop shares, was tried in the Circuit Court of Pittsylvania County, Virginia, for first degree murder on September 26 and 27, 1940. Waller pleaded self-defense. His attorney, Thomas H. Stone, moved to quash the indictment and the petit jury panel on the ground that non-payers of poll taxes had been systematically excluded from both. Judge J. T. Clement denied the motion. Waller's counsel asked for a change of venue on the ground that he could not expect a fair and impartial trial in Pittsylvania County. The motion was denied.

The only eyewitness to the shooting was a colored boy of 18, Henry Davis, who was at that time and had been at the time of the shooting in the employ of Oscar Davis' family. This boy testified that Waller shot Oscar Davis after a friendly conversation during which Davis had agreed to surrender Waller's share of their wheat crop, which he had withheld. Waller testified that Davis refused to surrender his crop; that Davis cursed him and they quarrelled; and that Davis ran his hand into a pocket in which Waller had known him to carry a gun. Thereupon Waller drew his own gun and, in his words, "commenced to shoot at him—I don't know how many times."

The jury of ten farmers, one business man and one carpenter found Waller guilty of first degree murder after deliberating 52 minutes. He was sentenced to die on December 27, 1940.

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

The story of Odell Waller and of the circumstances which led to his shooting of Oscar Davis has been told by Pauli Murray and Murray Kempton in a pamphlet entitled "All for Mr. Davis," with a preface by Frank P. Graham, President of the University of North Carolina, and published by the Workers Defense League. The following account is based on this pamphlet which in turn is based on the court record supplemented by the personal investigation of the authors.

At sixteen, Odell Waller had to leave school and work in the fields. His father, a landowner, died in 1938 and the land was taken to pay his debts. Odell went to work for Oscar Davis as a sharecropper, helped by Annie, his mother, and Mollie, his wife. For every four sacks of wheat harvested, three went into the Davis barn; three out of every six bundles of tobacco went to Davis. Their own wheat went into bread, and they depended on their share of the tobacco for what little cash income they had.

Oscar Davis had lost his own holdings and sunk into tenancy years before. Pressed from above by his landlord, he in turn bore down on the poverty-stricken colored people who worked for him. When the government reduced his tobacco allotment in 1940, he cut Waller's land down to less than two acres, pocketing the cash benefits paid for the reduction. The Wallers, their cash crop thus eliminated, faced a desperate winter.

Waller went to Maryland to work, leaving his wife and mother at the Davis farm. From Maryland he sent back money to pay his cousin Robert Davis for working in his place on the Davis land to save his share of the wheat crop. Meanwhile his mother, Annie Waller, had done housework for Davis during Mrs. Davis' illness. Davis owed her $7.50 (three weeks salary, at $2.50 per week), which he never found it convenient to pay. At last Annie Waller, when Davis asked her to work in his tobacco fields, refused unless paid her back wages. Thereupon Davis had the sheriff evict her and her daughter-in-law from their shack.

On Sunday morning, the 14th of July, Odell Waller came home on a visit and found that Davis was withholding his share of the wheat crop. The next morning he borrowed a truck and went with several other Negroes to the Davis farm to get his wheat. There the fatal shooting occurred.

THE APPEALS IN THE CASE

On the basis of the facts ascertained by Miss Murray and Mr. Kempton, the Workers Defense League, on November 15, 1940, took charge of Waller's defense and got John F. Finerty of New York as volunteer counsel. In December Governor James H. Price of Virginia stayed Waller's execution to March 14, 1941, to permit application to the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals for a writ of error. This was granted on March 4, 1941. On October 13, 1941, the Virginia Supreme Court affirmed the judgment and sentence of the Circuit Court, stating that the law of Virginia did not require such exclusion and that counsel for Waller "did not offer any proof whatsoever" that non-payers of the Virginia poll-tax had in fact been excluded from the jury. Thus the error of Waller's trial counsel in failing to produce specific proof of exclusion of non-payers of poll-tax from the jury was made the basis of the court's decision that Waller must die.

Waller's present counsel contends that no lawyer can inadvertently waive the constitutional rights of his client. He has once attempted to offer specific proof of the exclusion of non-poll-tax payers from the jury to the Supreme Court of Virginia and twice to the Supreme Court of the United States. The U. S. Supreme Court has twice refused without opinion to review the case.

Following the second refusal, Waller's counsel applied to the Federal District Court for Eastern Virginia for a writ of habeas corpus on the same ground. The application was rejected and Judge Pollard in rejecting it, stated that even if it had been proved that the jury was a poll-tax jury, it would still have been a jury of Waller's peers. Counsel then applied to the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals for leave to appeal, which on June 16 denied the application. On June 17 counsel applied to Chief Justice Harlan Fiske Stone of the U. S. Supreme Court for a leave to ap-

peal to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. The application was rejected. Justice Stone was then asked for a stay of execution to permit counsel to apply to the full bench of the Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari. This was also refused. The Chief Justice stated that under the allegations of the writ the courts were without power to stay Waller's execution. Commenting on this decision, Mr. Finerty and his Virginia associate in the case, Mr. Edmund M. Preston, issued the following statement:

"Mr. Chief Justice Stone of the Supreme Court of the United States tonight deenied Odell Waller leave to appeal to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals and denied Waller a stay of execution to permit Waller's counsel to apply to the Supreme Court of the United States for a write of certiorari.

"As Waller's counsel understand it, the Chief Justice felt that the Federal Court in habeas corpus proceedings could not consider whether Waller's constitutional rights had been violated because of the error of Waller's trial counsel in failing to offer evidence at his trial in the State Court of the fact of such violation. Thus the Federal Courts are held powerless, because of the error of Waller's trial counsel, to prevent Waller's execution even if his constitutional rights have in fact been violated. Counsel do not believe this doctrine in this case consistent with fundamental justice. Their only remaining hope is that under such circumstances Governor Darden will act to prevent Waller's execution."

On Thursday, June 18, Governor Colgate W. Darden, Jr. of Virginia granted a further reprieve to July 2 and set June 29 as the date for a hearing on commutation.

PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT

On Monday, June 15 a petition was sent to President Roosevelt requesting the appointment of a Presidential Commission of Inquiry, as in the Tom Mooney and Joe Hill cases. Among the 169 original signers were William M. Agar, Bruce Bliven, Dr. Harry Woodburn Chase, Dr. George S. Counts, Frank R. Crosswaith, Dr. John Dewey, Dr. Henry Pratt Fairchild, Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Dr. Frank P. Graham, Dr. F. Ernest Johnson, Paul Kellogg, Freda Kichway, Anita Loos, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Charles Clayton Morrison, Dr. John R. Mott, A. Philip Randolph, Dr. Gaetano Salvemini, Joseph Schlossberg, Walter White.

Among several hundred further signatures which have been forwarded to the President are: Emily G. Balch, Sarah Cleghorn, Dr. Clarence R. Decker, Stanley M. Isaacs, Dr. John N. McBryde, Rev. Edwin McNeill Poteat, E. S. Moody, Lieutenant-Governor Charles Poletti, Walther P. Reuther, R. J. Thomas.

New York Age
New York, N. Y

Memorial Mass Meeting Held Here To Mourn Killing Of Odell Waller

Under auspices of the New York Division of the March on Washington Movement, a memorial meeting to mourn the execution of Odell Waller was held Sunday afternoon at the St. James Presbyterian Church, 141st street and St. Nicholas evenue.

A fair-sized audience heard A. Philip Randolph, international president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and national director of the March on Washington Movement, and Frank R. Crosswaith, of the New York City Housing Authority and chairman of the Negro Labor Committee denounce attempts by the Communist Party to use Negroes as a stepping stone. The audience also heard Attorney John Finnerty, counsel for Odell Waller, tell of the legal aspects of the losing battle which had been waged to save his life.

With Dr. Lawrence M. Ervin, chairman of the New York division of the Movement, presiding, the meeting was opened with prayer by Thomas Patterson, of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Caar Porters. Miss Pauli Murray, of the Workers Defense League, told of efforts of the defense committee and gave a brief resume of the deceased sharecropper's life, reading the last letter he had written.

Mrs. Anna Arnold Hedgeman, of the Offce of Civilian Defense, told of the run around the committee had been given last week when an attempt was made to see President Roosevelt. She urged continued support and growth of the March on Washington Movement.

In his talk, Mr. Crosswaith declared that the "old story about turning the other cheek is over," and said that power is the only thing that anyone fears. He urged Negroes to harness their power in their fight for complete equality and said that the fight of the Negro is being hampered by efforts of Communists who are "muddying the waters."

Mr. Randolph said that the only way Negroes are going to get their rights is by mass procedure. Speaking of the South being in the saddle in Washington, he said that the President is dictated to by Southern Congressmen and gave that as one of the reasons for formation of the March on Washington Movement. He promised that if discrimination against the Negro continues, the actual march to Washington will be held "to tell the world that we want all of our rights." A petition, he said, will soon be circulated urging the President to abolish forever discrimination and jim crow in the United States and the sponsors of the plan hope to obtain one million signatures on the petition.

Following lifting of the collection by the Rev. Shelby Maxwell, jr., assistant pastor of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Ludlow Werner, managing editor of The New York Age, urged those present to work to defeat those New York Congressman who have failed to sign the petition in Congress to discharge the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill. "Let us answer the plea of the mother of Odell Waller," he said, "and show her that though it was not within our power to spare the life of her son, it is within our power to strike at the very root of the evil by defeating those who by their actions show that they favor continuance of the poll tax and all its attendant evils."

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Nation Mourns, 'Cropper Waller Dead; What Will Minister, Church Do About It?

By WITTIE ANNA BIGGINS

"YE SHALL know the truth, and the truth shall make you free!" So spake Jesus, the one Teacher whose lessons of right and righteousness have outlived generations, centuries, and historic cultures. Again the Master said: "How shall he hear wtihout a teacher, and how shall he teach except he be sent." Then did not Jesus do his share of sending them out when he commissioned the disciples to go into the world and preach the Gospel ..teaching them to observe all things.

The truth is: Odell Waller is dead; but he has not died in vain! Odell Waller's execution was not only the unjustifiable, legal lynching of another Negro, but it goes down in history as a fatal stab at the Bill of Rights, the Preamble of the Constitution, and the Constitution of this United States which is being offered daily to America's Negro soldiers as something worthy of fighting and dying for even on foreign fields of battle. Waller's execution is a death blow to that freedom being offered by the democratic nations —America and Great Britain—as the type of protection for the millions of mixed and colored races of the universe as their portion in helping democracy achieve universal victory.

Is not such missuse of justice on the part of those with whom this nation has entrusted the powers of authority sufficient to convince millions of Indians, Chinese, Africans, and mixed peoples of the world that if America fails to protest those of colored blood born within her own borders who have toiled in the glowing sun, borne her burdens after nightfall, and nurtured her posterity in the early morning dew, surely America cannot be counted on to protect the mighty hosts of colored nations on foreign soils who are not the least akin to the power-wielding Nordics.

Is there no wonder India and nations demand their freedom now rather than wait until after the war. Can't the Peglers, the Dies, the Peppers, and those who dare criticise the patriotism of the American Negro see his dire need for waging war on the home front while our sons, husbands, and fathers carry on "over there"

"The truth shall make you free." Out of every crisis from the fall of Adam in the garden to the present day has developed some degree of freedom for those who had the courage to demand and fight for it. Odell Waller's death gives to united labor, youth organizations, governmental set-ups, civic groups, fraternal leaders, racial units and political parties the greatest weapon for united action among races that histroy has ever produced.

Odell Waller's death has proved that by unity, and unity alone, can colored nations work out their own salvation. For centuries the white man has failed the darker nations. While basking in the sunshine of his prosperity and the triumph of capitalism, he forgot that God inquired of Cain....."Where is thy brother?"

As Jehovah declared Cain his brother's keeper, so is America the keeper of her children; and certainly the minister is the keeper of the common people as much as was Jesus who declared unto the father. "I have saved all save the son of perdition." Surely Jesus command to his disciples, "Teach them to observe all things," included the "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness that American democracy dishes out to a favorite few of her sons and daughters. Surely it involved the Gospel of citizenship, poll taxes, anti-lynching and all the other "isms" affecting the Negro, and the minister and the church have the right to fight for the Negro's freedom.

Unless Christianity takes its righteous stand in the struggles of this nation along with other fighting organizaions, there will be more Odell Waller's, and plenty of them...more Cain's slaying Abel's, until the voice of the Negro's blood shall cry unto America from the ground, for America must till her soil; and God has promised that it shall cease to yield its strength because it has received the blood of its slain brethren. Like unto Cain, great nations have become wanderers in the earth, and those who sought them have slayed them God is no respector of persons or nations! The tide must change and it is up to us to change it. Odell Waller is dead, but he shall not have died in vain!

4-1942
Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Impressive Rites Mark End Of Waller Case

BY J. H FULLER

DANVILLE, Va.—(SNS)—Thousands of people jammed the Fairview Church near Gretna Sunday, at 3:30 o'clock p. m. to pay the last tribute of respect to Odell Waller, who was electrocuted last Thursday morning at the Virginia State Penitentiary for the murder of one Oscar Davis, a white landlord.

A large crowd began gathering long before the services began, and the church was filled to capacity, the church yard was filled and cars lined the highway with license tags from many states including New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D. C. The services were very impressive and the crowd was very orderly.

The services were opened by singing "Nearer My God To Thee", after which scripture was read Prayer by Rev. P. H. Miller of Chatham. Mrs. Martha Minnis read a very impressive poem of which some strong statements were made among which were as follows: "Don't Grieve as God has a record of this". Miss Lala Lane, leader of the march on Washington in behalf of Wallace, made a talk and stated that she did not feel that the fight was in vain, Waller of course had lost his life, but the motive behind the cause had not been lost. She read a full statement made by Waller before his execution and copies of this statement are being printed to be distributed throughout the nation.

Miss Lane then led in singing by the congregation entitled 'WE NEGROES ARE ALL UNITED AND WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED,' The congregation sang this song with great feeling, and determination.

Only one white person was seen by the writer in the church or on the grounds and he was Mr. Morris Mangum, National Secretary Workers Defense League from New York Mr. Mangum made a short talk and his first words quote "I bow in humlbe submission, because I am a white man," he also stated that we have lost Waller, but we have not lost our fight for justice.

Rev. Jerry Redd of Danville spoke in behalf of Pittsylvania Company, and said, "Don't worry and argue with men about this case, but we are all going to tell Jesus about this. Thank God for Mr. Waller."

At the close of the services it was announced that copies of Odell Wallers' statement of his case would be printed and ready for circulation throughout the United States next week. The body was removed from the church into the churchyard where it was viewed by the large attendance, after which it was conveyed by the pallbearers to its last resting place only a short distance from the church.

Odell Waller is gone, but not forgotten, and he was given a funeral more like a martyr than a murderer.

Peoples Voice
New York, N. Y.

Judges Fail To Save Life Of Cropper

WASHINGTON—Four members of the US Supreme Court, three of them at least widely recognized as the greatest liberals, each individually denied a stay of execution to Odell Waller, Virginia sharecropper sentenced to die Thursday, July 2, for murder, after hearing appeals here Saturday. The appeals were made by Waller's counsel, Attorney John Finerty, under the law which permits any individual member of the high court to issue a stay.

The four jurists, Chief Justice Harlen F. Stone, Associates Hugo L. Black, Robert H. Jackson and Felix Frankfurter, are the only members of the high tribunal in Washington now. The court is adjourned for the summer, will reconvene in October.

Immediately after the four hearings, Finerty left for Richmond to appear before Governor Darden of Virginia at a hearing on a plea for commutation of Waller's sentence Monday. Attention of the entire nation is focussed on the 25-year-old sharecropper over whom the shadow of death has hovered for two years.

In denying the stay, Justice Frankfurter declared: "As a federal judge I am unable to find any justification for summary interference with the orderly process of Virginia's courts of justice." Frankfurter, Jackson and Black are considered among the most liberal men ever to sit on the high court.

Waller, whose fate this Thursday hangs on the slimmest of threads, was convicted of the murder of his white landlord, Oscar Davis, July 18, 1940, during a row over some wheat. Waller, at his trial, swore that he fired the fatal shots in self defense after Davis threatened his life.

The case, with the support of organiations all over the country, has been fought all the way. Last May 4 the US Supreme Court refused to review the case, offered no opinion on its decision however.

Basis of the defense is that Waller was convicted by a jury of white poll tax payers, not his peers, and consequently, has been deprived of his constitutional rights.

Chicago Tribune
Chicago, Illinois

FIFTH REPRIEVE GRANTED NEGRO SHARECROPPER

Richmond, Va., June 18 (AP).—Odell Waller, young Virginia Negro sharecropper scheduled to die tomorrow for the murder of Oscar Davis, a Virginia farmer, was granted a reprieve today by Gov. C. W. Darden to permit time for a hearing on a plea for commutation of his sentence. The hearing was set for June 29. The reprieve postponed the execution date to July 2.

The governor's action followed exhaustion of the 25 year old Negro's recourse to the courts and marked the fifth reprieve granted him since his conviction in Pittsylvania county, Va., in September, 1940.

"While it is the function of the courts to dispose of the legal questions in such cases as this," Gov Darden said, "the condemned man nevertheless is entitled to present to the executive his petition for clemency, and on this petition it is my desire that he be fully heard."

The reprieve was announced after the governor had talked by telephone with John F. Finerty of New York, counsel for Waller and the Workers Defense league, and had conferred at length with Attorney General Abram Staples.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Stay Execution Of Odell Waller Until July 2

Commutation Now Being Sought By Defense Counsel

RICHMOND, Va.—(S N S) — Governor Colgate W. Darden, Jr., of Virginia on June 18 granted to Odell Waller, Virginia Negro sharecropper under sentence of death for shooting his white landlord, a reprieve until July 2 to allow time for a hearing on a petition for commutation of his sentence. The hearing has been scheduled for June 29.

The petition to the Governor followed closely upon the refusal of Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone of the United States Supreme Court to allow Waller to appeal to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals and his denial of a stay of execution to permit Waller's counsel to apply to the full bench of the Supreme Court of the United States for a writ of certiorari.

The Chief Justice based his action on the failure of Waller's trial counsel to adduce specific proof of his contention that non-payers of the Virginia poll tax had been deliberately excluded from the jury which convicted Waller.

In a statement sharply criticizing the Chief Justice's attitude, Waller's present counsel John F. Finerty of New York and Edmund M. Preston of Richmond said:

"Mr. Chief Justice Stone of the Supreme Court of the United States tonight denied Odell Waller leave to appeal to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals and denied Waller a stay of execution to permit Waller's counsel to apply to the Supreme Court of the United States for a writ of certiorari.

"As Waller's counsel understand it, the Chief Justice felt that the Federal Court in habeas corpus proceedings could not consider whether Waller's constitutional rights had been violated because of the error of Waller's trial counsel in failing to offer evidence at his trial in the state court of the fact of such violation.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

VIRGINIA SLAYER DENIED REPRIEVE

Sharecropper Must Die For Death Of White Tenant Farmer

RICHMOND, Va., July 1—Gov. Colgate Darden Wednesday refused a sixth reprieve for Odell Waller, 25-year-old Negro sharecropper who is to die in Virginia's electric chair Thursday for the slaying of Oscar Davis, a tenant farmer. The governor refused Tuesday night to commute the sentence.

John F. Finerty, of New York, counsel for the Negro and representative of the Workers Defense League, made the request by telegraph to Gov. Darden who was attending a dedication of buildings at the Norfolk Navy Yard Wednesday.

Finerty said he needed time to apply to the U. S. Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari on "the refusal of the U. S. District Court and the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals to grant him (Waller) a certificate of probable cause for an appeal from the dismissal of his petition for a writ of habeas corpus."

The U. S. Supreme Court already had declined to act on an appeal from the Virginia Supreme Court in the same case.

Waller was convicted in Pittsylvania County Circuit Court for the killing of Davis on July 15, 1940, in an argument with Waller over the division of a wheat crop.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

One Last Hope

RICHMOND, Va.—(S N S)—Odell Waller, sharecropper, convicted of the murder of his white farmer landlord, and scheduled to be executed this morning at 8 o'clock, has one last hope. Prominent leaders Wednesday asked President Roosevelt to appoint a Presidential Commission on Inquiry to investigate Waller's case—the last hope.

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

Group To Aid Waller Unable To See F. D. R.

Committee Represented 600 Signers

WASHINGTON—(A N P)—The special committee, which arrived here Wednesday seeking Presidential intervention to save the life of Odell Waller, failed to gain an audience with the President, and the 25-year old sharecropper went to his death in Virginia on Thursday, July 2.

The committee, representing over 600 signers of a petition for a Presidentially appointed commission of inquiry, was, it was reported, referred by the White House to the department of justice, where the group conferred for more than an hour with Wendell Berge, assistant attorney general in charge of the criminal division, and with Victor Rottman, head of the civil rights bureau.

It was thought that Mr. Berge would convey to the President the views and statements of the committee and report any conclusions of Mr. Roosevelt in the matter. Mr. Berge, however, declined to say what transpired at the conference or later, except that the committee declared it would be a "natural calamity" if Waller were executed "when millions of his fellow citizens are convinced that he was not tried by a jury of his peers."

FULL PAGE AD

A full-page petition printed in a local newspaper on Wednesday stated that Presidential intervention would "help restore the badly shaken faith of our Negro minority in the American democracy."

Those comprising the committee were: A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and national director of the March-on-Washington movement; Frank Crosswaith chairman of the Negro Labor committee; Frank Reeves, NAACP; Miss Layle Lane, vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL; Elmer Carter, editor of "Opportunity"; Dr. Channing H. Tobias, national council of the YMCA; Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, president of Bethune-Cookman college; and Albert Hamilton, National Defense league.

The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

Gov. Darden Weighing Waller Case

By Lawrence Emery
(Daily Worker Staff Correspondent)

RICHMOND, Va., June 29.—Governor Colgate W. Darden, Jr., took under advisement today the question of a commutation of sentence for Odell Waller, condemned to die July 2, after an all-day hearing during which he repeatedly emphasized that the main issue to him is whether Waller is under sentence of execution solely because he is a Negro.

Waller is a sharecropper convicted two years ago in Pittsylvania County for the murder of his landlord, Oscar Davis, after Waller's family had been driven from their land and denied their share in a wheat crop.

Negroes, and poor white sharecroppers as well, were effectively excluded from the trial jury by the expedient of drawing veniremen only from lists of residents who had paid their poll taxes, but this issue was not brought forward as a major factor in the case in today's hearing.

Instead attorneys for the condemned man, John F. Finerty of New York and Edmund Preston of Richmond, confined themselves mostly to the trial record to show that it is a "composite mass of gossip" replete with glaring contradiction and at variance with new evidence brought to light since the trial.

Both men made it clear that to them the question is not whether Waller killed Davis, but whether he should be punished by execution or life imprisonment.

DEFENSE WITNESSES

Appearing before the Governor to urge clemency were John Stewart Ryan, president of the College of William and Mary; Dr. Beverly Boyd, recor of Grace and Holy Trinity Church of Richmond; W. D. Anderson, business agent for Richmond AFL truck drivers and former international representative of his union; David George, labor relations assistant for the War Production Board of Virginia and a kin of the slain man; E. A. de Bardenaue, an Episcopal preacher of Alexandria, Va., and Jacob Riley, a Negro instructor at Virginia Union University and a representative of the Virginia Committee on Civil Rights.

AFL leader Anderson told the Governor a commutation of sentence "would have a salutary effect on the labor movement throughout Virginia," and said he spoke for white and Negro members alike.

Labor Board Assistant George told of a recent 3 to 1 plant election victory for the CIO Textile Union after the Waller case had been made an issue in the campaign with a vigorous editorial in the union's paper urging clemency. He cited this to show popular support by white workers in the county where the trial occurred.

LYNCH THREATS

It was repeatedly suggested throughout the hearing that violence will follow a commutation of sentence and several unnamed sources were quoted as saying that if Waller's sentence is commuted there will be no more trials in Pittsylvania County but that lynchings will take their place.

Governor Darden took the occasion several times today to answer such threats with emphatic vigor, citing Virginia's 16-year record of no lynching and declaring that as long as he is Governor, there will be none. Any attempt at violence, he declared, will be put down with an "iron hand," no matter what its source.

The Governor said the Waller case has attracted nationwide attention and that his office has been flooded with appeals for clemency, and that he even had one long-distance telephone call from Seattle, Wash.

He denounced, however, the activities of the Trotzkyite Workers Defense League which got control of the case in its early stages, said a pamphlet they issued was malicious and filled with falsehoods.

Attorney Preston was even more bitter in his condemnation of Trotzkyite handling of the case, said they made no effort to save Waller's life and were criminally negligent in protecting his legal rights.

Finerty, on the other hand, sought to defend Trotzkyite activities in the case, did a little fancy red-baiting by saying that "Communists" would like to see commutation denied so they "can say there is no justice in capitalist courts."

He said the case boiled down to determining whether Waller killed with premeditation or on the spur of the moment.

Clearest statement of the case here was made not in the hearing room but in an editorial in the Times Dispatch which said the case has international dimensions.

"Colored people in both hemispheres," it said, "will believe, whether rightly or wrongly, that Negroes do not get justice in America, if Waller goes to the chair. In that event, the Axis can be counted on to make the most of the electrocution, and to use it with particular effect in China, and India, and throughout the Arab world."

There was nothing in the hearing room to indicate that a war is in progress and that the Waller case has a bearing on it through its effect on national unity and the role of the Negro people in this fight for freedom and democracy.

Martin A. Martin, Negro attorney of Danville, presented figures today to show that Pittsylvania County requirements are limited to persons who have paid a poll-tax, but not much was made of the evidence. Attorney Preston said he did not intend to try the poll-tax issue, although the Governor urged defense counsel to present anything that would clarify the case.

LIES EXPOSED

Witnesses called today included Henry Davis, Negro sharecropper employed by the slain man and a prosecution witness. He became so involved in contradiction that the Governor said he was convinced he was lying. He was the State's only eyewitness to the shooting.

Records of the hospital where the slain man died were introduced to contradict effectively testimony at the trial as to the nature and number of the gunshot wounds.

Most impressive witness was little work-twisted Annie Waller, the condemned man's foster mother, who told in a straightforward, unafraid manner the relations between the Wallers and their landlord.

She said working for him meant "nothing for Annie, all for Davis."

She listed an accumulation of grievances which finally led to Odell's leaving for other work while she stayed behind to settle his share of a wheat crop he had put in. While Odell was gone things got worse, and she was eventually driven from Davis' land.

Odell came home to get his share of the wheat, drove a truck with Annie and several of his friends to collect it.

She said when Odell asked for his share, Davis answered with a curse, reached for his back pocket. She stood up to act out the scene for the Governor.

"You know, Mr. Governor," she said, "when a man throws his hand back like that, you don't know what he's gonna do." She said Waller shot in self defense.

4-1942
Amsterdam Star-News
New York, N. Y.

Around and Beyond.....By Frank Crosswaith

THE public's reaction to the tragic case of Odell Waller is indeed encouraging and is largely the result of the excellent work done by the Workers Defense League. The League is non-political and, as its name implies, it will defend labor's rights regardless of race, skill, creed, color or sex. Many of its leaders are among the nation's most outstanding figures in the fields of religion, education, labor and jurisprudence. When the people of the U. S. finally begin to enjoy the full fruits of democracy, organizations like the Workers Defense League will undoubtedly be given much credit for the victory achieved.

Mr. Crosswaith

Here is a sample of what the League has done in the Waller case:

"The Deadly Parallel"

"When the Black Man Shoots.

"Odell Waller, Negro, with his wife and mother to support, went to work on the farm of Oscar Davis, white, as a sharecropper in 1938. The Waller family moved into a shack on the Davis farm.

"During the spring of 1940, Waller's acreage was cut by the AAA. Lacking enough land to make a living, Odell went to Maryland to work, leaving his wife and mother on the Davis land. His mother also worked for Davis, who refused to pay her, and evicted the two Negro women. After the harvest Davis held Waller's share of the wheat crop.

"On July 15, 1940, Odell Waller came home on a visit. The next day he borrowed a truck and went to the Davis farm, with his mother and several other Negroes, to get his wheat. Davis refused to surrender the wheat. In the quarrel which ensued, Waller shot Davis, who died two days later.

"Waller was tried for murder in September, 1940, before Judge J. T. Clement of the Circuit Court of Pittsylvania County, Va. He pleaded self-defense. A white jury, from which non-payers of Virginia's poll tax were systematically excluded, after deliberating 52 minutes, found Waller guilty.

"Waller was sentenced to die. The Workers Defense League took charge of the case. The Virginia Supreme Court, on October 13, 1941, confirmed the judgment and sentence of the lower court. Petitioned for a writ of habeas corpus on the ground that Odell Waller had been denied the right to trial by a jury of his peers, it denied the petition without explanation. On May 4, and June 1, 1942, the U. S. Supreme Court, appealed to on the same ground, declined without opinion to review the case. WALLER MUST DIE FRIDAY, JUNE 19, UNLESS GOVERNOR COLGATE W. DARDEN, JR., OF RICHMOND, VA., COMMUTES HIS SENTENCE."

When the White Man Shoots.

"Tom Denson, Negro, with his wife, and four children from 14 to 21 years of age, began to work as a sharecropper on the farm of R. G. Sittle, white, sometime before October, 1941.

"During the early fall of 1941, Denson and Sittle quarrelled. Sittle ordered Denson off the farm and took all the crops, most of which had been harvested. Denson obtained a court order requiring Sittle to permit him to return and finish harvesting, and to release his share of the crops. Denson went to the Sittle farm with three or four helpers and began harvesting tobacco, corn and potatoes.

"On October 20, 1941, while his helpers were digging potatoes, Denson, who had been to his own cabin, started down the drive which led past Sittle's house to the potato patch. Sittle and his wife were on the porch. The two men got into an argument. Sittle had his wife hand him his shotgun which was on the porch beside the door. He shot and killed Denson.

"Sittle and his wife were tried for murder in November, 1941, before Judge J. T. Clement of the Circuit Court of Pittsylvania County, Virginia. A white jury, after deliberating 15 minutes, found Sittle and his wife not guilty.

"Tom Denson's widow, Pensy Denson, qualified as his administratrix and sued R. G. Sittle for $10,000 for unlawful killing of her husband. The case was tried in January, 1942, before Judge J. T. Clement of the Circuit Court of Pittsylvania County. The jury promptly rendered a verdict in Sittle's favor."

Support the Workers Defense League, 112 East 19th Street, N. Y. C., and help to save any future Odell Wallers.

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

Odell Waller

Governor Darden of Virginia is to be complimented on his decision Thursday to reprieve Odell Waller till July 2. Between now and then Waller, a Negro sharecropper who was condemned to death for the murder of his landlord, will present his petition for clemency There is no question of the man's guilt. Waller is a bad man with a bad record who on the eyewitness evidence of one of his own race shot his landlord in the back and side. What is in question—and it is only slightly in question—is whether the crime was premeditated. Only if premeditation is proved to the hilt can the charge of first degree murder be substantiated and Waller sent to the electric chair.

Of course, there are other arguments for clemency, and they have been aired pretty thoroughly throughout the Nation. One of the arguments is that Waller did not get a trial by a jury of his peers. What does this mean? If in this case it were interpreted that the jury should be composed of sharecroppers, and Negro sharecroppers at that, such a construction would be a travesty. The constitutional insurance of fair trial can only mean that every man shall be assured of a jury of representative citizens. There was no objection at the time that there was no such jury in the Waller case.

But since Waller was taken up as a symbol of the miscarriage of justice it has been stated that the jury was selected from persons who have paid their poll tax. If this is true—and there is no specific evidence to this effect—the composition of the jury would be of dubious constitutionality. Presumptively, however, the payment of poll tax was one of the criteria in selecting the Waller jury. This newspaper many times in the past has put itself on the side of those who want to see the poll tax eliminated as a test of the voting privilege. It is consistent with this record that we question even an informal understanding that payment of a poll tax is a sort of fitness for jury duty.

Some day the thorny problem of the poll tax and its relation to the selection of juries must come before the Supreme Court. And there is considerable force in the argument that there could be no better time than when we are engaged in a war for the defense of those liberties of man which include equality before the law. In fighting injustice abroad, we must not wittingly harbor injustice at home. No doubt Governor Darden will take these matters into account in listening to Waller's plea.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

Odell Waller's Fate

IN view of the action of the United States Supreme Court it appears improbable that anything short of commutation of sentence by Governor Darden will save Odell Waller from the electric chair on Friday, June 19th.

As this article is written there is a slim chance that the Circuit Court of Appeals may intervene, but it is only a hairline chance. Acting upon the assumption that Waller's counsel has exhausted every recourse to the courts, many outstanding persons of both races in Virginia and throughout the country are petitioning Governor Darden to commute the young share-cropper's sentence to life imprisonment.

Among strong appeals made to this end are editorials which appeared Sunday in the Richmond Times-Dispatch and the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot. There were doubtless others which have not come to our attention.

The Pittsylvania County court has held that Waller committed first degree murder and has been sustained by the higher courts. The United States courts have refused to recognize the constitutional questions raised by Waller's counsel, and thus open the way for a new trial. That leaves the fate of Waller in the hands of Governor Darden, who is being importuned to exercise executive clemency on the merits of the moral questions involved. Some of the petitioners go further and raise the question of doubt as to Waller's guilt in the first degree, as witness the Times-Dispatch:

> There is reasonable doubt in the case of Odell Waller's conviction of first degree murder. While there are apparently damning facts, there are also what appears to be extenuating circumstances, which doubtless could be brought out, if there was another trial.

It must be borne in mind, too, that the Waller case involves more than the status of justice in one Virginia county. Whether we like it or not, Waller's case has become a cause celebre, with national, even international, implications. Incredible as it may appear to some, the execution of this Negro sharecropper might lessen the chance of the United Nations to win the war.

After noting that the first degree murder conviction has been the subject of adverse editorial comment in some of the most influential conservative newspapers in the country, the Times-Dispatch said:

> Add the fact that we are in a war for survival, in which we are depending heavily for victory upon the colored races, and the significance of the Waller case becomes clearer.

The Virginian-Pilot went to the root of the social and economic cancer which underlies this typical share-cropper tragedy, when it said:

> The mitigating factor lies in a depth of human behavior which juries cannot easily plumb but which the Governor can. The illiterate Negro sharecropper and his white landlord had quarreled over a division of crops. When he set out to kill, Waller was consumed by a passionate resentment against a fancied injustice. Real or imagined, this injustice poisoned his mind and the poison impaired his responsibility.
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> But that social and economic maladjustment, in its peculiar Southern implications, was a mitigating factor in this legally-defined first degree murder, we have no doubt. We commend that consideration to Governor Darden . . . . It is worth his further consideration that under Virginia law death and life imprisonment are optional penalties for first degree murder, and that if he decides to commute Waller's sentence to life imprisonment he will do no more than the jury had the right to do and could have done without violence to the punishment which the State has prescribed.

There is little more that can be said in this eleventh hour of the tragic fate of a youth who stands before the world today as a victim of a system which he could not escape, a system which in the very processes of a social-minded government's plan for improvement, he is caught between the necessities of crop reduction and the grim exploitation of extra-legalism in the hands of the more favored landlord class.

There is much that can be done at this late hour towards saving this youth from the electric chair. In the few remaining days before the date set for execution our citizens can write or wire Governor Darden to commute Waller's death sentence to life imprisonment.

Amsterdam Star-News
New York, N. Y.

Odell Waller to Die Next Week Unless High Court Acts

Upper Tribunal Refused on May 4 to Hear Appeal For Rehearing; Gave No Opinion for Action

Is the judiciary of the United States of America, the greatest democratic institution in the power-mad world, deliberately ignoring the voice of the people in the case of Odell Waller, 23-year-old Negro sharecropper disenfranchised by poverty under the statutes of the State of Virginia?

On or before Friday, June 19, 130,000,000 Americans will have this pertinent question answered. But the answer may cost the life of a boy whose only crime was his refusal to be robbed.

Waller has been sentenced to die in a Richmond prison next week. The Supreme Court on May 4 last refused without opinion to reopen the case.

But on the same day that the Supreme Court denied the Waller appeal, it reversed a verdict which had convicted Henry Allen Hill of rape in Texas. The grounds of the reversal were that Negroes had been excluded from the jury which returned the verdict. Handing down his decision and opinion, Chief Justice Stone declared:

"Equal protection of the laws is something more than an abstract right. It is a command which the State must respect, the benefits of which every person may demand."

Critics of the contradictory action of the Supreme Court and of the Chief Justice contend that "equal protection" is as applicable in Virginia as it is in Texas, especially where the merit of the case has been preestablished. Since States are obliged to respect the right of equal protection, it is pointed out, then the tribunals of the land must also respect the same right since the Constitution of the United States binds every person and institution within its jurisdiction.

Went to Landlord in 1940

On Monday morning, July 15, 1940, Waller drove a truck to the farmhouse of Oscar Davis, white tenant farmer and Waller's former landlord, to pick up 50 bags of wheat which he had earned while employed by Davis. He had relatives to help him load the wheat.

Davis was standing in his doorway talking to a Negro employe.

It was the testimony of this employe, Henry Davis, although discredited by the defense, that literally pulled the switch which may yet end Waller's life. Davis testified that Waller, in effect, had lied throughout the trial. The reason for Davis saying this is all too obvious to persons familiar with interracial procedure in the Southland.

However, Waller demanded his wheat. Davis refused and a quarrel ensued which, fearing Davis might harm him, Waller shot his ex-boss. The white man died two days later.

A preliminary hearing was held and the case turned over to the grand jury. A Pittsylvania County Grand Jury indicted Waller on a first degree murder charge and on September 26, 1940, Waller was tried before a jury of 10 farmers, most of whom—like the slain man—employed sharecroppers. The other two jurors were a carpenter and a businessman.

Waller Judged Guilty

Waller pleaded not guilty. The jury deliberated less than an hour and returned a guilty verdict. Waller was sentenced to die December 27. However, Governor James H. Price granted a stay of execution until March 14, 1941, to permit defense counsel to apply to Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia for a writ of error.

On March 4 the Court of Appeals granted a writ permitting the appeal. But on October 13 the Virginia Supreme Court affirmed judgment and sentence of the Circuit Court. Waller was resentenced to death on December 12 and again Governor Price granted stay to allow filing for writ of habeas corpus. January 22, 1942, the writ was denied by the State Supreme Court without reasons.

Other litigation followed and on May 4 the U. S. Supreme Court again refused to review the case. Two days later Governor Colgate W. Darden, Governor Price's successor, set the date of execution to June 19.

Rally Due in Garden

Three days before Waller is supposed to die, a huge rally will be held in Madison Square Garden, New York, to protest undemocratic treatment of Negroes. It is the March-on-Washington movement and one of its favorite themes will unquestionably be the miscarriage of justice that has kept Waller in the shadow of death.

The Waller case involves a great deal more than just a man's life. It involves the constitutional right of an accused person to be tried by a jury of his peers. The Constitution of the State of Virginia makes the annual payment of $1.50 for three consecutive years a requisite for casting a ballot. This proviso, according to Senator Carter Glass, was deliberately intended to disenfranchise Negroes.

More Whites Than Negroes

In effect it disfranchises as many, if not more, whites as it does Negroes. Lists of qualified voters are consistently consulted in drawing jurors. Thus, Odell Waller was convicted by a jury of white voters, 10 of whom were farmers employing sharecroppers and akin by occupation to the man Waller was on trial for slaying!

If the Supreme Court shall once more refuse to review Waller's case, a plea for commutation of sentence will no doubt be made to Governor Darden who has already shown a courageous disregard of political consideration by granting two reprieves. Because of this record, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Governor Darden will decide that both justice and mercy can better be served through commutation of sentence than by committing the irrevocable error of sending a man to his death on the basis of presupposed guilt.

To add strength to the appeal for executive clemency for Waller, the Virginia State branches of the N. A. A. C. P. began to flood the offices of Governor Colgate W. Darden with pleas that the young ex-sharecropper's life be spared.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

Darden Denies Reprieve For Odell Waller

JUN 20 1942

Court of Appeals Alone Can Save Youth From Chair

RICHMOND—Favorable reaction by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals to an appeal for a stay of execution for Odell Waller, 25-year-old sharecropper, convicted to die in connection with the death of his white landlord, Oscar Davis, was the final straw of life left for the young man following Governor Darden's refusal to grant another reprieve.

In announcing his decision, the governor said defense counsel for Waller had "ample time" to present the case to the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which opened Monday, before Waller's execution date, Friday, June 19.

Governor Darden's statement was made shortly after Judge Robert M. Pollard, of the United States District Court refused to grant Waller a writ of habeas corpus. The judge also denied certificate of probable error for appeal.

POLL TAX JURY

The petition declared that Waller was denied a fair trial in that the jury that convicted him was drawn from a panel of poll tax payers.

The Waller case, outgrowth of the killing of Oscar [illegible] in an argument over shortage in pay-

Virginia dailies have joined in sounding this appeal.

Some of the leading dailies and magazines, both North and South, including the New York Times, have asked Governor Darden to commute the sentence to life imprisonment.

All of these papers have assailed the poll tax and sharecropper systems as evils that must be eliminated.

It must be borne in mind, too, that the Waller case involves more than the status of justice in one Virginia county. Whether we like it or not, Waller's case has become a cause celebre, with national, even international, implications. Incredible as it may appear to some, the execution of this Negro sharecropper might lessen the chance of the United Nations to win the war.

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On or before Friday June 19, of the United States binds every 130,000,000 Americans will have this pertinent question answered. But the answer may cost the life of a boy whose only crime was his refusal to be robbed.

Waller has been sentenced to die in a Richmond prison next week. The Supreme Court on May 4 last refused without opinion to reopen the case.

But on the same day that the Supreme Court denied the Waller appeal, it reversed a verdict which had convicted Henry Allen Hill of rape in Texas. The grounds of the reversal were that Negroes had been excluded from the jury which returned the verdict. Handing down his decision and opinion, Chief Justice Stone declared:

"Equal protection of the laws is something more than an abstract right. It is a command which the State must respect, the benefits of which every person may demand."

Critics of the contradictory action of the Supreme Court and of the Chief Justice contend that "equal protection" is as applicable in Virginia as it is in Texas, especially where the merit of the case has been preestablished. Since States are obliged to respect the right of equal protection, it is pointed out, then the tribunals of the land must also respect the same right since the Constitution same right since the Constitution of the United States binds every person and institution within its jurisdiction.

Went to Landlord in 1940

On Monday morning, July 15, 1940, Waller drove a truck to the farmhouse of Oscar Davis, white tenant farmer and Waller's former landlord, to pick up 50 bags of wheat which he had earned while employed by Davis. He had relatives to help him load the wheat.

Davis was standing in his doorway talking to a Negro employe. It was the testimony of this employe, Henry Davis, although discredited by the defense, that literally pulled the switch which may yet end Waller's life. Davis testified that Waller, in effect, had lied throughout the trial. The reason for Davis saying this is all too obvious to persons familiar with interracial procedure in the Southland.

However, Waller demanded his wheat. Davis refused and a quarrel ensued which, fearing Davis might harm him, Waller shot his ex-boss. The white man died two days later.

A preliminary hearing was held and the case turned over to the grand jury. A Pittsylvania County Grand Jury indicted Waller on a first degree murder charge and on September 26, 1940, Waller was tried before a jury of 10 farmers, most of whom—like the slain man—employed sharecroppers. The other two jurors were a carpenter and a businessman.

Waller Judged Guilty

Waller pleaded not guilty. The jury deliberated less than an hour and returned a guilty verdict. Waller was sentenced to die December 27. However, Governor James H. Price granted a stay of execution until March 14, 1941, to permit defense counsel to apply to Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia for a writ of error.

On March 4 the Court of Appeals granted a writ permitting the appeal. But on October 13 the Virginia Supreme Court affirmed judgment and sentence of the Circuit Court. Waller was resentenced to death on December 12 and again Governor Price granted stay to allow filing for writ of habeas corpus. January 22, 1942, the writ was denied by the State Supreme Court without reasons.

Other litigation followed and on May 4 the U. S. Supreme Court again refused to review the case. Two days later Governor Colgate W. Darden, Governor Price's successor, set the date of execution to June 19.

Rally Due in Garden

Three days before Waller is supposed to die, a huge rally will be held in Madison Square Garden, New York, to protest undemocratic treatment of Negroes. It is the March-on-Washington movement and one of its favorite themes will unquestionably be the miscarriage of justice that has kept Waller in the shadow of death.

The Waller case involves a great deal more than just a man's life. It involves the constitutional right of an accused person to be tried by a jury of his peers. The Constitution of the State of Virginia makes the annual payment of $1.50 for three consecutive years a requisite for casting a ballot. This proviso, according to Senator Carter Glass, was deliberately intended to disenfranchise Negroes.

More Whites Than Negroes

In effect it disfranchises as many, if not more, whites as it does Negroes. Lists of qualified voters are consistently consulted in drawing jurors. Thus, Odell Waller was convicted by a jury of white voters, 10 of whom were farmers employing sharecroppers and akin by occupation to the man Waller was on trial for slaying!

If the Supreme Court shall once more refuse to review Waller's case, a plea for commutation of sentence will no doubt be made to Governor Darden who has already shown a courageous disregard of political consideration by granting two reprieves. Because of this record, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Governor Darden will decide that both justice and mercy can better be served through commutation of sentence than by committing the irrevocable error of sending a man to his death on the basis of presupposed guilt.

To add strength to the appeal for executive clemency for Waller, the Virginia State branches of the N. A. A. C. P. began to flood the offices of Governor Colgate W. Darden with pleas that the young ex-sharecropper's life be spared.

Journal and Guide
Norfolk, Virginia

Darden Denies Reprieve For Odell Waller

JUN 20 1942

Court of Appeals Alone Can Save Youth From Chair

RICHMOND—Favorable reaction by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals to an appeal for a stay of execution for Odell Waller, 25-year-old sharecropper, convicted to die in connection with the death of his white landlord, Oscar Davis, was the final straw of life left for the young man following Governor Darden's refusal to grant another reprieve.

In announcing his decision, the governor said defense counsel for Waller had "ample time" to present the case to the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which opened Monday, before Waller's execution date, Friday, June 19.

Governor Darden's statement was made shortly after Judge Robert M. Pollard, of the United States District Court refused to grant Waller a writ of habeas corpus. The judge also denied certificate of probable error for appeal.

POLL TAX JURY

The petition declared that Waller was denied a fair trial in that the jury that convicted him was drawn from a panel of poll tax payers.

The Waller case, outgrowth of the killing of Oscar Davis in an argument over shortage in pay, has attracted nation-wide attention.

Some of the leading dailies and magazines, both North and South, including the New York Times, have asked Governor Darden to commute the sentence to life imprisonment.

All of these papers have assailed the poll tax and sharecropper systems as evils that must be eliminated.

Virginia dailies have joined in sounding this appeal.

4-1942
Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Ask Va. Governor To Save Waller's Life

JUN 20 1942

RICHMOND, Va., June 18—Widespread appeals in the form of letters and telegrams are flooding the office of Governor Colgate W. Darden Jr., asking clemency for Odell Waller, sharecropper, convicted and sentenced to die June 19 for the murder of his white landlord in a dispute over crop shares.

The Virginia State branches of the NAACP are leading the fight to save Waller through action of the Governor and prominent leaders throughout the country have signed an appeal to the Governor.

HIGH COURT REFUSED TO REVIEW WALLER CASE

John F. Finerty, Workers Defense League attorney and counsel for Waller, presented a petition for an original writ of habeas corpus in the Federal District Court for Eastern Virginia before Judge Robert Pollard. If the petition is denied Finerty plans to carry an appeal to the Circuit Court and Supreme Court providing Waller gets another stay of execution.

The U. S. Supreme Court last week refused to review the Waller case and dismissed the suit that had been filed raising a constitutional question over the poll tax issue. The suit charged that juries were selected from a list of voters who had paid their poll taxes and was not a fair test for jury selection.

The NAACP entered the case in November, 1940, shortly after Waller was sentenced to die on December 17, and has filed legal briefs in the case in co-operation with the Workers Defense League.

of all those to whom democracy is denied in our country."

Waller was a voteless sharecropper, too poor to qualify for full citizenship by paying the Virginia poll tax. In 1938 he went to work as a sharecropper on the farm of Oscar Davis. With him were his wife and mother. In 1940 after Davis had cut his acreage, Walter went to Maryland to work, leaving his wife and mother on the farm. He sent back money to pay a cousin for working in his place on the Davis land. The mother also worked for Davis, who refused to pay her and evicted the two women. On July 15, 1940, Waller came home. The next day he borrowed a truck and went to the Davis farm, with his mother and several others, to get his wheat, which had been held by Davis. Davis refused to surrender the wheat and in the quarrel which ensued, Waller shot Davis, who died two days later.

Pleading self-defense, Waller was tried for murder in September, 1940, before Judge J. T. Clement of the Circuit Court of Pittsylvania County, Va. After deliberating for 52 minutes, he was convicted by a jury of white poll tax payers, 10 of whom were of the same group of employing farmers as the man he shot.

Odell Waller had been denied the right to trial by a jury of his peers by the Commonwealth of Virginia. He had become a symbol of second-class justice for second-class citizens.

In 1940 and 1941, before Judge J. T. Clement of the Circuit Court of Pittsylvania County, Va., almost an exactly similar case was tried. All the circumstances were the same with this exception, a white landlord named Sittle had shot a Negro cropper named Tom Denson. Only there was no quarrel, simply that Denson's truck had broken down near Sittle's home, and standing on a bank with a double-barreled shotgun Sittle had shot down Denson. A white jury, deliberating 15 minutes, found Sittle not guilty.

The Waller case has twice come before the Supreme Court and twice the court has refused to hear the case. John Dewey, America's greatest philosopher, warned in a letter to the New York Times that if the court dodged the issue of trial by one's peers, "the effect will certainly be to weaken the faith of the poor—and especially of poor Negroes—in the democratic process."

Typical of the reaction of leaders of the Negro community is the flat statement of A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, that "Negroes have no faith in American democracy at this time, and the execution of Odell Waller would tend to deepen their distrust of democratic institutions."

The one hope for justice now is that Governor Darden will commute Waller's sentence. By granting repeated reprieves while Waller's appeals were pending, Governor Darden has proved himself to be a generous and humane executive. He will unquestionably give serious consideration to public opinion in making his decision and is bound to be influenced by the volume of protest that reaches his desk.

The committee working on behalf of Odell Waller urges you to add your voice to that of others in urging that Governor Darden will act consistently with justice and democracy.

ALBERT W. HAMILTON.
Washington, June 13.

Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

Democracy Denied Odell Waller

I am writing this letter in the hope that a number of readers of The Post will feel moved to write to Gov. Colgate W. Darden, jr., of Virginia urging the commutation of sentence of Odell Waller, a Negro who sits in the State prison at Richmond waiting to forfeit his life to the great Commonwealth of Virginia.

The life of one man may seem unimportant in a world where millions are dying, but Pearl Buck the noted writer has remarked "Odell Waller has ceased to be an individual; he has become a personification

World-Telegram
New York. N. Y.

Waller Reprieved For New Hearing

By the Associated Press.

RICHMOND, Va., June 18.—Odell Waller, 25, Negro sharecropper scheduled to die tomorrow for the murder of Oscar Davis, farmer, was granted a reprieve today by Governor Darden to permit a hearing on a plea for commutation of sentence. The hearing was set for June 29 and the execution postponed to July 2. It was the fifth reprieve granted to Waller since his conviction in September, 1940.

"While it is the function of the courts to dispose of the legal questions in such cases as this," Governor Darden said, "the condemned man is nevertheless entitled to present to the executive his petition for clemency, and on this pettion it is my desire that he be fully heard."

Chicago Tribune
Chicago, Illinois

NEGRO EXECUTED FOR GUN SLAYING OF WHITE FARMER

Legal Redress Exhausted, Waller Dies in Chair.

JUL 3 1942

Richmond, Va., July 2.—Odell Waller, 25 year old Negro whose case attracted national interest and was carried to the United States Supreme court, died in the Virginia electric chair today for the murder nearly two years ago of his employer, Oscar Davis, a white tenant farmer.

After 630 days in death row, Waller was led to the execution chamber at 7:35 a. m. Chicago time. He was pronounced dead 10 minutes later.

Several of the dozen witnesses permitted by law were from Pittsylvania county, where Waller shot and mortally wounded Davis after what the Negro described as a dispute over division of a wheat crop.

Asks Divine Forgiveness.

In a written statement on the eve of his execution, Waller said: "I have asked God to forgive me and I feel He has."

Counsel for Waller contended that an error of his trial counsel was responsible for the failure of appellate courts to intervene, and champions of his cause enlisted the support of prominent individuals thruout the nation.

In Washington, leaders of the Workers' Defense league said they sought in vain last night to obtain an audience with the President in behalf of Waller. 'A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, later issued a statement saying, "The President and government of the United States have failed us."

Carried Thru All Courts.

Waller's case was carried thru state and federal courts over a period of two years. For a time there were indications that it might become another "Scottsboro case," but it never quite achieved that height.

The shooting for which Waller died took place on July 15, 1940, at Gretna, Va. The Negro sharecropper nad been working wheat land with Davis, but went to Maryland to take other work, leaving his wife and mother on the Virginia farm and paying a cousin to save his part of the crop.

While Waller was absent, Davis allegedly put the Negro's wife and mother off the land. When Waller returned to claim his share of the wheat, Davis was said to have attempted to withhold it. There was a quarrel and Waller shot Davis to death.

A jury of ten farmers, a business man and a carpenter convicted Waller of first degree murder after deliberating less than an hour following a one day trial in the Circuit court of Pittsylvania county. Waller was sentenced to die on Dec. 27, 1940.

Poll Tax Is Defense Key.

The repeated and extended efforts of Waller's defenders to obtain a reversal were based on their contention that the Negro had been deprived of his constitutional rights; that instead of being tried by a jury of his peers, he was indicted and convicted by juries from which had been excluded persons who had not paid poll taxes, which, in effect, excluded Negroes and other poor share croppers.

During the 630 days Waller spent in death row he was granted five reprieves in connection with efforts to free him. The Virginia Supreme court affirmed the sentence and subsequently refused to grant a writ of habeas corpus; the United States Supreme court refused to review the case, giving no opinion, and the United States District court and Circuit Court of Appeals refused to grant writs delaying the execution.

Gov. Colgate Darden granted two reprieves, the last on June 18 to allow a hearing on a plea for commutation of the sentence, which was denied. The governor yesterday refused to grant a sixth reprieve.

Virginia Governor Dooms Sharecropper

New York World Telegram
By the Associated Press.

RICHMOND, Va., July 1.—His last hope apparently gone, Odell Waller, 25-year-old Negro, awaits death in the electric chair tomorrow morning for the slaying of his white employer, Oscar Davis, a tenant farmer.

Gov. Colgate W. Darden, Jr., citing the opinion of Virginia's Supreme Court of Appeals that the former share cropper had received "a fair and impartial trial," declined last night to interfere with the sentence.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

Waller Case Is Example of Pressure

Governor Gets a Desk Full of Protests.

Waller, Poor, Punished Because of Color.

Poll Tax Charges Make State Wince.

RICHMOND — Park habitues fed the squirrels, doves strutted and cooed, and sweethearts and loafers basked in the warming sun in Capitol Park on Monday.

Inside the old Senate chamber Governor Colgate W. Darden, Jr., weighed the life of Odell Waller, 25-year-old Pittsylvania sharecropper, who shot and killed Oscar Davis, white landlord, near Gretna on July 15, 1940, in a dispute over crop division.

Waller Poor Man

Waller, obscure and poor, was reported violent at the penitentiary, where he was scheduled to die on Thursday after battling his way twice to the United States Supreme Court only to be rejected on a technicality.

Governor Darden, who deplored use of the case to attack Virginia's poll tax system as well as Pittsylvania justice, declared that the only issue was whether Waller was sentenced to the chair because he is colored.

Judge Denounced

Edmund Preston, white Richmond attorney who denounced Judge J. T. Clement of the Circuit Court as a "disgrace to the Virginia judiciary" and iron-handed jurists who cut short testimony of Waller's mother, Mrs. Annie Waller, said that the evidence was not the kind to send a man to the chair.

John F. Finerty, white attorney of Washington and New York, who took the case twice to the United Supreme Court, and then made individual pleas for stays to four justices of the court, said that Communists and other radicals had mishandled the case, but must be credited with extending Waller's life line.

Waller's Mother Talks

Alert, composed, Mrs. Annie Waller said that Oscar Davis was so hard that he refused to pay her $7.50 for nursing his wife for three weeks, and demanded that she get off his holdings when she had the nerve to ask for money or some fertilizer.

Henry Davis, Oscar's colored hired man who found the landlord "a father and mother to me," said that Odell shot without warning and without cause—said he fired twice into Oscar's back as he lay on the gorund with two other bullets in his body.

Dr. Beverly Boyd, rector of Grace and Holy Trinity Church here, said that Virginia justice would be served by commuting sentence.

That Poll Tax Business

Martin A. Martin, Danville attorney, said that the Pittsylvania court clerk denied him access to all poll tax records.

Professor J. W. Riley of Virginia Union University and the Civil Rights Committee said that submarginal people like Waller get into trouble when they rebel against oppression and exploitation.

E. L. Johnson, white neighbor of Oscar Davis said that Davis told him that Waller shot without cause and that "n-----s should be killed" and he agreed.

David George, who said that Davis married three of his cousins in a row, stated that one of his relatives told him that Davis was "to hard on that n----r."

Sheriff A. H. Overby testified that Waller should go to the chair, and said that commutation would cause trouble by colored people, who would gather on the streets and talk about the case as a way of celebrating a victory.

Nation in a Furore
National Furore

Waller, who left the Davis farm in the winter of 1940 after a disagreement with his landlord over his tobacco acreage, had aroused a national furore over whether he should go to the chair.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt asked Governor Darden to spare his life. So did William Green of the A.F. of L., and Philip Murray of the CIO.

The Textile Workers' Union at Danville demanded commutation, and won its election to represent Danville white workers, although the opposition made Waller an issue in unionism.

The young sharecropper had lived almost two years in the center of a constant legal and propaganda battle, and only slightly less in the death house.

Came Home from Baltimore

He started things when he came home in 1940 from Baltimore and learned that Davis had not given him one-fourth of the 208 bags of wheat he had raised.

Waller borrowed a truck, loaded up his mother, two relatives and a friend, and went for his wheat. When he arrived at the Davis farm and asked for his share, Davis cursed him and told him that he would get nothing.

He contended, and his mother said the same, that Davis reached for his hip pocket, and Waller fired several times. Oscar Davis fell wounded and died a few hours later.

The prosecution contended that Davis promised to deliver the wheat to him as soon as he finished some scheduled threshing.

Medical Record Differ

Medical records differ on how and where Davis was shot.

Mr. Preston said that he was struck in the right arm, grazed on the right side of the head, and wounded in the right hip.

The hospital record bore him out, but Henry Davis and the testimony of the doctor who examined Oscar Davis were different.

Henry Davis said that he was standing beside Oscar when Waller shot, first striking the white man in the left arm, then on the left side of the head.

Henry said that Waller shot at him and he fled on all fours around the landlord's house, ran through the kitchen to the front, and saw Waller pump two bullets into the prostrate man's back.

Confronted with the record by the attorneys, he said that was what he was told. Mr. Finerty then told Governor Darden that the whole case was built upon lies told by Henry.

Governor Questions Mother

Governor Darden, who visited Pittsylvania to investigate the case last week and was told that Waller was a bad sort and sold liquor, asked his mother.

Mrs. Waller admitted that Waller sold liquor in a small way, and said that Davis and his son, Frank, took the bootlegging business away from him when he came to work on shares with Davis in 1939.

Too, she said, Davis was known as a hard man who pressed upon his colored sharecroppers, was so moody and ill tempered that he carried a gun after a quarrel with his own son.

Mr. Preston and Mr. Finerty said that the case had been complicated because Waller first was defended by the American Revolutionary Workers' League of Chicago, with Thomas Stone, white radical Richmond lawyer, as chief attorney.

Stone, they contended, failed to lay the proper ground work in the case, and that is why Waller was turned down by the State and Federal Courts.

Not Premeditated

Both said that the system of land tenancy and race prejudice tended to injure Waller's chances, but both said that the radicals aroused the country and kept Waller living.

They maintained that nowhere did the record show that Waller went to the Davis farm with the intention of killing the landlord and witnesses differed so much that there had to be doubt in the case.

New York Age
New York, N. Y.

Harlem Workers Club Holds Odell Waller Memorial Meeting

A memorial meeting in protest of the legal lynching of Odell Waller was held by the Harlem Workers Club Monday night.

George Breitman, editor of the Militant, was the invited speaker. He told the story of Odell Waller's life, of the discrimination he faced because he was a Negro and of the hardships he faced because he was poor and a worker. The way to honor Odell Waller's memory, the speaker said, was to continue the struggle against racial discrimination and the poverty and insecurity of the sharecroppers and the workers.

Many in the audience took the floor in agreement with the speaker. A minister told of his failure to secure employment in defense industries because he was a Negro. Another speaker pointed out that Negro and white sharecroppers must join hands in their struggle for better conditions.

The Harlem Worker's Club sent two telegrams, one to Mrs. Waller and the other to President Roosevelt.

To Mrs. Waller: "We, the members of the Harlem Workers' Club are gathered here tonight to mourn with you the loss of your son, Odell, whose only crime was that he was born poor. We pledge ourselves to honor his memory in the best way we know how, by carrying on our struggle against the system of social and economic oppression which destroyed him."

To President Roosevelt: "We, the members of the Harlem Workers' Club assembled in mass meeting protest the legal lynching of Odell Waller, a victim of jim crow justice. Part of the responsibility rests with your administration which by its silence and refusal to take action, defended a brutal system of economic and social oppression."

The Harlem Workers' Club will meet again on Friday, July 24, at 8:30 p. m., at 72 West 125th street.